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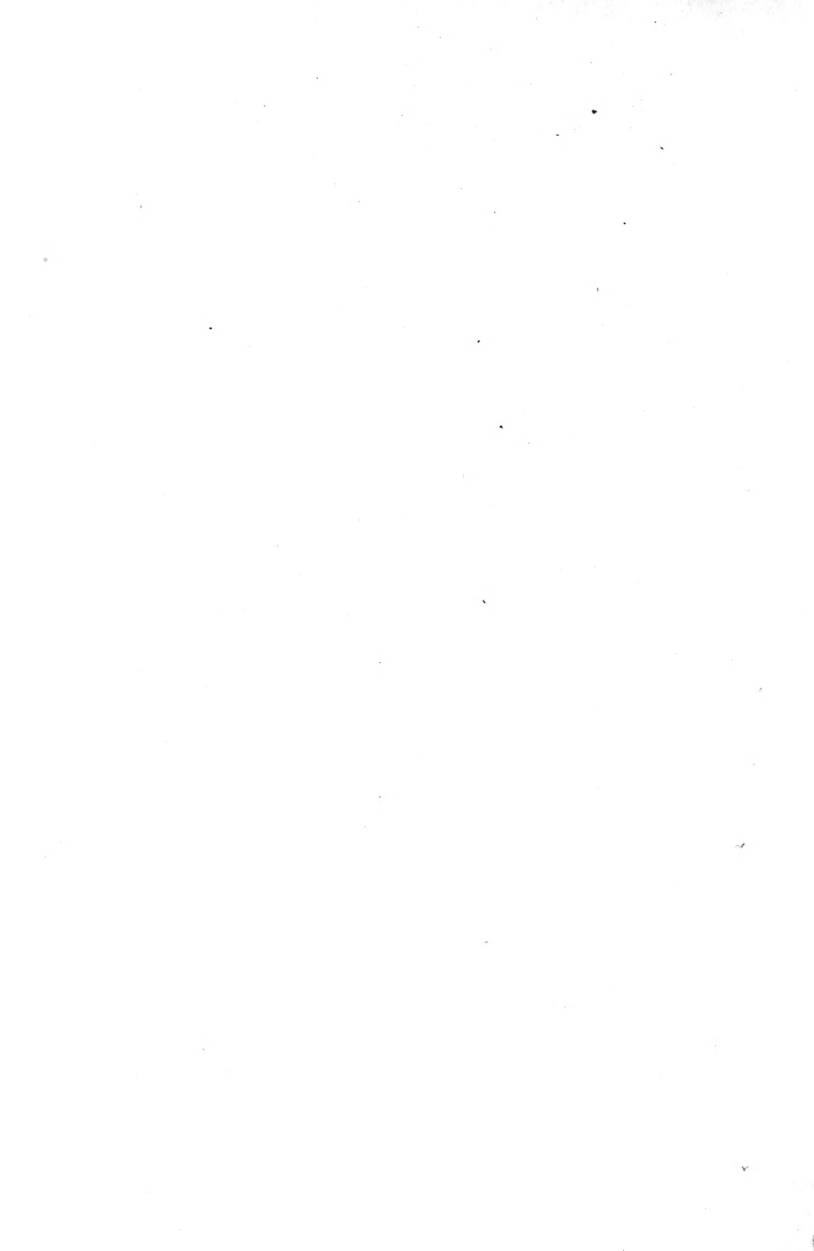
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The end of a rainbow

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THE END OF A RAINBOW



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THE SHOWER.

THE
END OF A RAINBOW

AN AMERICAN STORY

BY

ROSSITER JOHNSON

AUTHOR OF "PHAETON ROGERS"

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK

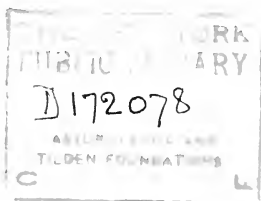
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1923

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THE END OF A RAINBOW.

CHAPTER I.

THE SHOWER.

THE shower came up very suddenly, but not before we three — Fred Crawford, his sister Millicent, and I — had gained the shelter of a long, open shed that was built against one side of Grindle's great barn.

We sat on an old wood-sled, and watched the rainy column as it advanced across the fields, sweeping away to the right, striking a poplar tree in its path and turning up all the silver linings of the leaves, overtaking in the lane three horses that were running wildly for shelter, tearing a few shingles from the deserted cottage at the fork of the road, and seeming to spend its last force as it dashed against a sturdy and sombre piece of woodland. Then for a little while it poured steadily everywhere, and from the edge of the shed rolled down a brilliant curtain of water between us and the landscape.

Such showers are like the tears of childhood : they are

very much in earnest while they last, but they never last long. The clearing up was as rapid as the coming. The curtain broke into ribbons, the ribbons dwindled to lines of drops, the drops straggled farther and farther apart, and the fowls that had taken shelter with us ventured out one by one to look for worms and resume their usual course of life. I doubt if any of them saw the beautiful bow that spanned the sky; or, if she did, she only thought it an unusually large worm, caught and carried up by some unusually strong and lucky bird.

Millicent was the first to see it, and gave a half-articulate shout of surprise and delight. Fred, her brother, contemplated it earnestly for some time in silence, and then said:

“I wish we could get to the end of it.”

“The end will come pretty soon,” said I. “Rainbows never last long.”

“I don’t mean that,” said he. “I mean the spot where the end touches the ground.”

“What good would that do?” said I. “You couldn’t climb it.”

“Maybe we could get some of the ribbons,” said Millicent.

“It would make us all rich,” said Fred, solemnly.

“I don’t see how,” said I. “You couldn’t sell a rainbow, even if you had it all cut up in regular pieces and piled on a cart, numbered and ready to be set up again.”

"Don't you know," said Fred, "that at the end of a rainbow there is always a crock of gold?"

"I never heard of it," said I.

"Well, there is," said he. "I heard Uncle George telling about it last week."

"And a gold crock," said Millicent, "would be a great deal prettier in our parlor than that ugly-looking old vase that mamma paid so much money for."

"I didn't say a gold crock," said Fred; "I said a crock of gold. It's just a common stone-ware crock, or sometimes a big bowl, filled full of gold dollars and five- and ten-dollar pieces."

"And did your uncle George find one?" said I.

"No," said Fred, "but his hired man knows a man that did."

"What do you suppose the crock of gold is put there for?" said I—"to steady the end of the rainbow, so it can't be blown away?"

"I don't know what it's there for," said Fred, "and I don't care much, if I can only bring it home."

"Was the one the man found hitched right on to the end of the rainbow? or did he have to dig for it?"

"I believe he had to dig a little," said Fred.

"This rainbow is an awful big one," said I, "and it ought to have a crock according."

"I've no doubt it has," said Fred. "But the trouble is, we can't go after it through the wet fields."

"It will always be wet when there's a rainbow," said Millicent.

"I have an idea," said I. "Suppose we go to the top of this barn, and see just where the end of the rainbow touches the ground. Then to-morrow, if it's a dry day, we can go to that spot and dig up the crock."

"That's it exactly," said Fred ; and at once he looked about for some means of getting to the top of the barn.

There was no ladder, and the only way was to begin by climbing a post of the shed. With liberal "boosting" from us, Fred accomplished this, and from the roof of the shed, by the help of cleats that the carpenters had left, he made his way to the top of the barn.

After careful observation, he told me to get something to mark the direction. I took one of his arrows (we had been shooting at a mark), and, laying it across the barn-yard fence, turned it till he declared that it pointed exactly at the foot of the rainbow. Then I cut a notch in the top of the fence, and wedged in the arrow, where it remained, pointing the way to wealth and happiness.

"It's not far from the corner of a corn-field," said Fred, when he came down, "and it's between a big tree and a round white stone about the size of a prize hog. It's about fifteen of my longest steps from the stone, and about twenty-four from the tree."

"It will be very easy for us to find it," said I, greatly pleased at the accuracy of Fred's observation.

"Yes," said he, "and the place where it touches the ground is all smooth grass."

"That's lucky," said I, "it'll be so easy to dig. If it had happened to rest on the stone, or on the roots of the tree, we should have a hard time getting at the crock."

"Oh, in that case, we'd blast the stone with powder, or chop down the tree," said Fred, speaking as if he had had long experience in exhuming crocks of gold.

We agreed that we would set out together the next afternoon, when lessons were over, and get the crock.

"What are you going to do with your share of the money?" said I to Fred, as we were walking home.

"The first thing I'll do," said he, "is to pay off the mortgage on our house. And for that reason I want to keep it all a secret. I want to surprise father and mother. Won't their eyes bung out when I walk into the house with a bag full of gold and bang it down on the table and tell them to help themselves?"

"I should think they would," said I. "But after they've helped themselves, what are you going to do with the rest of it?"

"First I'll buy a Shetland pony and a little sulky," said he; "and then I'll have a clock-factory and a bank of my own."

"If mamma lets me have mine, to do just what I want to," said Millicent, "I'd like to have a wax-doll fac-

tory, with a hundred people in it making dolls all the time for the poor children that can't buy any."

"What do you want of a clock-factory?" said I to Fred.

"One thing I want it for," said he, "is to build a big astronomical clock."

"What is that?" said I.

"That," said he, "is a big clock with a long pendulum and ever so many extra wheels and things, and the sun, moon, and stars in a half-round place—like the one in grandfather's dining-room. It tells all about the planets and the northern lights, and the comets and meteors, what they are going to do, and just when they are going to do it. I'll have mine made so it'll tell when there are going to be rainbows, and just where they are to be. Then I can be on the very spot, with a spade and a bag and my Shetland pony; and the minute the bottom of the rainbow strikes the ground, I can dig up the crock before anybody else gets it."

"Why not catch it before it goes into the ground?" said I.

"Oh, the crock doesn't come down on the rainbow," said Fred. "It's in the ground already. And when a rainbow takes place, there is some sort of magnetism that draws the end of it to any spot where there's a crock of gold."

"How do you know that? Who told you?" said I.

"Nobody told me," said Fred ; " I know it by thinking about it—got it out of my inner contingency, as father says."

" But how did those crocks of gold come to be there ?" said I.

"Buried there," said Fred, solemnly, " by robbers, assassins, and pirates of the Spanish main. They buried them in all sorts of places, some of them hundreds and hundreds of years ago."

"Well, that's a splendid plan," said I. " May I put in some of my money, and own half of the clock-factory ?"

" I'll think about it," said Fred, dubiously.

I did not quite like this answer. It made me feel uncomfortable. It seemed as if Fred were growing a little selfish with his new riches, and wanted to monopolize all the good opportunities for the investment of capital. But presently a happy thought came to me.

" Look here, Fred," said I, " are there not two ends to every rainbow ?"

" To be sure there are," said he.

" And is there not a crock under each of them ?"

" I suppose there must be," said he, after a moment's deliberation.

" Then if we were in partnership in the clock-factory," said I, " while you were at one end of the rainbow, I could be at the other ; and so we should probably get all the crocks there are."

Fred commended the wisdom of this suggestion, and agreed to take me into partnership.

"If you get all the crocks," said Millicent, "there won't be any for Sammy Whitney to get. And I want Sammy to have two or three. Sammy is a real good boy."

"Sammy can take care of himself," said Fred, carelessly. "This is our enterprise."

As for me, I said nothing. I knew perfectly well that Sammy, as Millicent had said, was a good boy, one of the best in the world; and yet at that moment a feeling of dislike toward him, from some indefinable cause, sprang up in my heart. I did not want him to have any of the crocks of gold, but I hardly felt like saying so, after what Millicent had said

.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHASE.

THE next afternoon, the weather being clear and beautiful, we met in Fred's back-yard, and with much whispering and many catlike and mysterious movements, made ready for our expedition.

Fred opened the outside cellar-door, softly descended the steps, and soon reappeared with his jacket bulging out considerably where he had stuffed two salt-bags under it. Then he led us around to the back piazza, where he had collected and concealed the implements that he considered necessary for the work before us. After looking stealthily about, to make sure that we were unobserved, he crawled under the piazza and brought out a garden trowel, a horseshoe, a tin box containing crackers and cheese, and a rusty horse-pistol.

"What is the horseshoe for?" said I.

"For luck," said Fred. "And don't you see it is the very shape of a rainbow?"

"And what is the pistol for?" said I.

"That's for our defence," said he. "We don't know

who may be watching us, and try to rob us when we are coming home."

Millicent expressed fear of the weapon.

"You needn't be afraid," said Fred. "It can't go off, for the lock is broken, and it's not loaded. But we can keep still about that, and it will have just as good an effect on the robbers."

He decorated me with the horseshoe, thrusting it into my jacket, so that half of it was inside and half outside, its weight being sustained by one of the buttons. He also gave me the trowel to carry. The box of luncheon was intrusted to Millicent, and Fred himself carried the pistol.

We first went to the spot where I had fastened the arrow of fortune in the top of the fence, and found it undisturbed. Taking our direction from this, we set out to march in a straight line through fields and over fences, till we should arrive at the angle of the cornfield, the large tree, and the stone as big as a prize hog.

Through the first two fields it was a pleasant march. The turf was soft to the tread, there was a convenient gap through the fence, and the little brook was easily crossed on rude stepping-stones. Fred stalked on before with a martial tread, carrying his weapon as if it were ready for instant use. Millicent followed him closely, and I brought up the rear.

The third field was rough. Several great boulders

had been pitched into it at some geologic epoch, and centuries later, but still before our day, a gale had prostrated the large trees that covered it. Their trunks had long since disappeared, but the effects of the windfall were visible where small mounds, all lying in one direction, had been created by the upturning of the roots. After winding about for awhile among these mounds and boulders, we lost the straight line on which we had set out. So Fred mounted the largest stone, took an observation from Grindle's barn—for the arrow was invisible at that distance—and laid out our course anew.

We got on pretty well till we came to the next fence, but here we had to go out of our way considerably to find a place where Millicent could climb it.

"Women are a drawback in every expedition," said Fred. "All history teaches that."

It occurred to me that Fred must have been reading with remarkable diligence, to get through all history at his time of life.

We made allowance for the digression, and travelled on confidently till we found ourselves on the border of a small morass, which Fred immediately named the Great Dismal Swamp. A bluebird sprang from a little thicket in its centre and flew away, and Fred couldn't help pointing his pistol at it as it flew.

"Now, don't you do that, Freddy," said Millicent. "If you shoot the birdies I won't play."

“ Play ! ” said Fred. “ This isn’t play. This is toil and adventure. We’re going to make our fortune in earnest.”

“ But I don’t want any fortune,” said Millicent, “ when the birdies are all dead.”

For a moment it looked as if this dissension might break up the expedition ; but I restored harmony by suggesting to Millicent that, as the pistol could not possibly go off, the birds were perfectly safe.

“ Here’s the worst thing we’ve come to yet,” said Fred. “ By the time we get around to the other side of the swamp, we shall lose the course again, and it won’t be so easy to find it this time.”

While we were discussing that great obstacle, we sat down on the grass and disposed of the luncheon.

The little thicket prevented our continuing the line by sight. I suggested that I could throw a stone across ; and if Fred were on the other side, to see which direction the stone came from, he could lay out the course again. This was agreed to, and it was arranged that Millicent should stay with me, that she might not be hit by the stone. Fred made his way round the Great Dismal Swamp in about six minutes, and when I heard his call I threw the stone.

“ Not far enough ! ” he shouted.

In looking about for another stone, I lost the original direction ; but I threw at a venture, and this time came the answer, “ All right ! ”

Millicent and I passed slowly round the swamp, following in Fred's path, and found that he had laid out the course with great nicety by driving two sticks into the ground about twenty paces apart. This looked like skilful work, and I had not the heart to tell him it might all be wrong because of my losing the original direction.

We set out on the line indicated by the two stakes, and followed it with great precision till it brought us up against a haystack. But it was easy enough to pass around this, and we found no further difficulty till we came to a small piece of woods. This looked rather discouraging at first; but we found it was comparatively open, with scarcely any underbrush, and Fred ordered the expedition to march directly through it, he leading the way as usual.

It was not difficult to pass through, but it was impossible to go in a straight line, and I felt very uncertain about the course when we emerged on the other side. Fred, on the contrary, was all confidence, and struck out again as bravely as ever.

After we had climbed two more fences, and crossed another brook, we came to the corner of a corn-field.

"That's it exactly!" said Fred.

"But I don't see any stone as large as a prize hog," said I.

"Nor any big tree," said Millicent.

Fred owned with great reluctance that he could not see these landmarks himself, yet he was unwilling to admit that we were not near the lucky spot.

"Perhaps somebody has cut down the tree," said I.

"And some else body has blewed up the stone," said Millicent.

Fred's brow darkened a little, for he suspected we were poking fun at him, though we both spoke seriously.

"There's only one thing to be done," said he. "The place is certainly somewhere around here, and we must scatter in different directions and search for it. If we don't find the end of the rainbow we started for, we may have the luck to find the other end."

"I'm afraid some of us may get lost," said I, thinking especially of Millicent, who evidently did not approve of the proposition to scatter, though she said nothing.

"I'll arrange for that," said Fred. "But first we must find some whistle-wood."

Whistle-wood was any kind of wood the bark of which could be taken off whole, so as to make a whistle. Fred found a young chestnut-tree, declared that was the very best kind of whistle-wood, broke off a branch, took out his pocket-knife, and soon produced three whistles. He gave one to each of us, and instructed us that if we found the end of the rainbow, or were attacked by a highwayman, or saw a bear or other dangerous wild animal, the one who

saw it was to whistle loudly, and the other two would immediately run thither.

“Remember,” said he, “to whistle once if it’s a robber, twice if it’s a wild animal, and three times if it’s the end of the rainbow.” Then he appointed our routes, and we all set off.

It was not more than five minutes before three blasts were blown from Millicent’s whistle. Fred and I, running at full speed, arrived about the same moment at the spot where she stood in the angle of a rail-fence.

“I’ve found it! I’ve found it!” said she. “Look! look!”

We looked, and saw at a little distance a pretty cottage, surrounded by a green hedge; and through an opening in the hedge was visible something that did resemble a piece of a rainbow.

“It’s too bad,” said Fred, looking disappointed.

“What’s too bad, Freddy?” said Millicent. “I thought you’d be glad I found it. Isn’t that the very thing we came to look for?”

“Yes, that is the very thing,” said he; “but just see where it is — right in the door-yard of that cottage. Of course they won’t let us dig there. How awfully unlucky!”

“But it may be,” said I, “that all the family are away from home; that sometimes happens. Or, if they are at home, it *may* be that they are good-natured people,

and will let us dig up the crock, if we promise to put back the dirt and sods and make it all as clean as it was before."

"Yes, but they might be greedy enough to want half of the gold," said Fred.

Still, my suggestion was comforting to him, and he said he hoped if they were gone away they had not left a big dog unchained. So we climbed the fence, and set off across the intervening field.

But when we arrived at the gap in the hedge, lo and behold! the thing we had seen was a home-made bed-quilt of brilliant colors, which hung on a clothes-line in the door-yard.

Millicent and I laughed, but Fred was too much in earnest to take the disappointment good-naturedly.

"I should think, Millie," said he, "that you would have known better than that."

Millicent said nothing, and looked as if she were going to cry; for she thought that everything her brother did or said must be right, and she could not bear to be censured by him.

"How can you say that, Fred?" said I. "We have as many eyes as she has, and yet we were just as much mistaken."

"Oh, yes, of course," he answered; "but women and girls are expected to know all about needlework when they see it. Men are not supposed to."

I felt that his reasoning was lame and unjust to Millicent, on whose account I was indignant ; but I could not exactly point out the fallacy, and so was silent.

“Well, never mind,” said he, as we turned sadly away from the rainbow quilt ; “we’ll try it again. And this time we must be more careful.” So he gave us our directions, and we separated.

I went down a short lane, crossed a small clover-field, and came to a large corn-field. As I skirted along the fence, seeking the best place to climb it, I looked down the narrow aisles between the long rows of corn, and far down one of them saw something that caused me to suspend my breath. As soon as I could catch it again, I blew my whistle three times most vigorously. I was intensely excited, and it seemed a long time before Fred and Millicent appeared. But at last I saw them running down the lane, and I stood on the fence and swung my cap and shouted.

“Now we have it ! now we have it !” said I, as they reached me. “And it’s not in anybody’s door-yard, either. It couldn’t be in a better place. We can dig as much as we please, and nobody can see us.”

“Well, where is it ?” asked Fred.

“About in the centre of this corn-field,” said I. “Follow me.”

Never, before or since, have I felt quite so important as at that moment. Fred was obliged, for the time be-

ing, to fall in behind me, and I had become the leader, if not the commander, of the expedition that was now marching to unearth the rainbow's treasure.

In the excitement I had lost the exact direction of my discovery, so that we wandered about for some time among the corn. But suddenly we came upon it, and stopped in mute astonishment. It was a disused barber's-pole, which the farmer had procured at some shop in the city and had set up in his corn-field, hoping that its bright colors and unusual appearance would arouse the suspicion of the crows and keep them away.

"Is that what you called us to see?" asked Fred, with an intonation that expressed extreme disgust.

"Upon my word," said I, solemnly, "I thought it was the stump of a rainbow, twisted when the lightning struck it."

"I should think you'd know an old barber's-pole when you saw it," said Fred.

"How could he know much about barbers'-poles?" said Millicent, kindly defending me in turn; "he doesn't ever get shaved."

I appreciated her good intention, but was not sure that I relished the allusion to the fact that I was not quite a man yet.

"Never mind, Fred," said I; "it will be your turn next, and, of course, you will find the real thing."

"I intend to find that or nothing," he answered, confi-

dently ; and after getting out of the corn-field we separated again.

Sure enough, the next triple blast came from Fred's whistle.

When Millicent and I reached him, we found him sitting on the railing of a little bridge over a brook, and exhibiting a coolness and composure that I suspected were more than half-assumed.

"Well," said I, "where is it? I don't see anything that looks like it."

He took me by the shoulders, turned me half round, and pointed to a distant barn that stood close by the high-road.

"Can you see that barn?" said he.

"Very plainly," said I.

"Well, then," said he, "the end of the rainbow is so near that barn that it seems to be right against the side of it. Now look sharp."

"I see it!" said I. "Yes, I see the colors surely. And they are just as they should be when the whole rainbow was there—red on one side, blue on the other side, and the other colors between. That can't be anything but the end of our rainbow. Bul—I mean, hurrah for you, Fred! There's no fooling about it when *you* whistle."

"I generally make sure I'm right before I go ahead," said he.

"Oh, I see it, I see it now!" suddenly exclaimed Millicent. "It takes Freddy to do everything!"

"There's one unlucky thing about it," said I, as we were walking toward Fred's discovery.

"What's that?" said he.

"It is in the road, right in front of that big barn," said I; "and we can hardly dig there without somebody's seeing us."

"That's true," said Fred; "but then again it's lucky, for when we get the gold, nobody can come up and claim it by saying we found it on his land. We shall find it in the public road, which doesn't belong to anybody."

I felt at once that this was the most important of all considerations in regard to the locality of our rainbow, and expressed myself as entirely satisfied with Fred's find.

In due time we arrived at the high-road, and, sitting on the fence opposite the barn, were able to contemplate the rainbow at leisure.

The advertising agent of a new French blacking had set forth its virtues in a few bold words on the side of this barn, and, for a conspicuous trade-mark, had painted the French tricolor, making it reach from the eaves to the ground.

Millicent hardly knew what to make of it. I felt that Fred had the first right to speak, and was silent. Fred was for some time, if possible, more than silent. I hardly dared to look into his face. At length he spoke.

"I wonder," said he, "if the people around here have got up a conspiracy to fool us."

"It looks like it," said I.

"Yes, it does," said he, as he slowly descended from the fence to the road; "and I never want to come into this disagreeable neighborhood again."

"Aren't we going to find any more rainbows, Freddy?" said Millicent.

"Not to-day," he answered; "for we've hardly time enough to get home before dark."

Then we trudged along the road, most of the time in gloomy silence, and reached our homes just soon enough to take our places at the supper-table, where at least hope and its emblems seldom proved illusive, and there was no conspiracy to fool us.

CHAPTER III.

A RACE FOR WEALTH.

IT was not many days after the rainbow chase when Fred came over to our house one morning before breakfast. He whistled, and I slipped out at the back-door in an instant. As soon as I saw him, I knew from his manner that he had important news to communicate.

“What is it?” said I.

Without uttering a word in reply, he threw up his head with that peculiar motion which says “follow me,” and led the way to a reëntrant angle of the house, where an unused door did not open on a piazza that had never been built. My sister Lucy’s window was just above it. Putting his hands behind him, and planting them on the broad sill of the door, which was about waist high, Fred made a spring and seated himself thereon. I imitated the manœuvre, and was seated beside him.

“The water is going to be let out of the race to-day,” said he.

“How did you find out?” said I.

“Last night,” said he, “when I was coming home from an errand at the drug-store, I walked behind two

men that work in the Hydraulic Building, and heard them talking about it."

"But before we can get there all the things will be gone," said I.

"That's just what I want to talk about," said Fred. "I don't think they will be. For I heard these men saying they were trying to keep the matter hushed up, because they had been bothered so much last year, and year before, by boys and other people going in. One of the carpenters had a new adze stolen, and another lost one of his boots, which he thought a junkman carried off."

"No boy would steal a carpenter's adze," said I; "it's too big for a boy to use."

"Of course not," said Fred. "A cooper's adze might be a temptation, but not a carpenter's. But they don't think of that. They just want to keep the boys out, by not letting anyone know about it until it's all over."

"Well," said I, "we can easily defeat them this time, by telling all the boys as soon as we go to school."

"Oh, no," said Fred, "that's just what I don't want to do. If we told all the boys, what chance would we stand? I want to have nobody know it but you and me, and then we can reap the whole harvest. I'll go to school with a bag buttoned under my jacket, and you do the same; and we'll get out at three and be off for the race. Then we shall get all there is this time. But if we're going to do that, I must go home and begin to

study," and he slid off the sill to the ground. "Be sure you keep mighty still about it," said he, as he passed through the gate.

The race that we had been talking about was a large flume, perhaps twenty feet wide and a dozen feet deep, constructed of timbers and planks, which passed along the front of a score of mills and manufactories. In some parts of the country it would be called a canal. It was sunk so that its top was level with the ground, and the planking that covered it formed a roadway for the teams that brought wheat to the mills and hauled flour away. The water entered it from a point in the river above the great falls, and each mill along the route had an opening from which it drew the amount of water necessary to turn its wheel. The surplus water poured out from the lower end of the flume in a great, curved stream, that made a respectable cascade as it leaped to the level of the flats, fifty or sixty feet, and thence tore away, over a gravelly bed, with abundant noise and foam, to rejoin the river. Often a pretty rainbow was to be seen spanning this cascade; but as its ends either faded away in the air or seemed to rest on the sheet of falling water, it offered no facilities to the gold-seeker.

At long intervals there were short, open spaces where the covering of planks was omitted, and a thick square beam was laid along the edge as a guard. Fred and I had often sat on one of these beams, and looked at the dark

mass of water moving swiftly and silently along beneath us, the flume being always full, and speculated as to the small chance of getting out alive if one were to fall in. Once the body of a drowned shepherd dog, with its long, white hair floating out straight, flashed past us; and on two occasions Fred was sure he saw the body of a murdered man go by. On the second occasion he described it with great particularity, even to "a bloody cut over the right eye," and at my suggestion we ran to the end of the race, to see it go over the cascade, but nothing of the sort appeared.

"We are too late," said Fred, tragically. "He has gone down the river and will find a watery grave in the lake, with no man to tell the tale."

As I heard nothing of any man being missed at that time, I am inclined to think Fred was mistaken.

But there was another thing, more important to us than the fate of any murdered man, about which it seemed there could be no mistake. There were mysterious and unknown treasures all along on the bottom of that race. There must be. Its roof, or deck, for nearly its whole length, was a busy thoroughfare, and the planks that formed it had cracks between them as wide as the thickness of your hand. If a teamster dropped his pocket-knife, down it went. If any rings or buckles became loose on a harness, the horse had only to shake his neck, and down they went. If a boy carrying his father's din-

ner stubbed his toe and fell, of course the cover flew off from the basket, and the ivory-handled knife and fork and the silver spoon went down through a crack. If two men were making change in a trade, and any of the coins slipped from their hands, down they went into the dark water. If any old gentleman was careless with his heavy, gold-headed cane, it caught in a crack and down it went. If a pickpocket was chased by a policeman, of course he threw the stolen wallet into the race, whence it could not be recovered and brought into court.

Not that any large number of old gentlemen with gold-headed canes promenaded there every day. Not that we had ever seen a pursued pickpocket running that way. But there were such old gentlemen, and there were pickpockets ; and it stood to reason that in course of time all these things must happen. Furthermore, there were traditions, firmly believed by all the boys, and never disputed, that many articles of great value had been found by those who were fortunate enough to be there when the water was drawn off. This was done about once a year, in order that workmen might go through the flume from one end to the other, inspect it carefully, and make whatever repairs were found necessary. The highest prize mentioned in these traditions was a watch and chain. I never saw that watch, and I never knew a boy that had seen it ; but it was the universal testimony that such a watch had been found in the race " by a boy over

the river." No matter which side of the river the narrator was on, he would always tell you it was "a boy over the river" to whom this fortune fell. I suppose the lucky fellow must have had a name, like other people, but I never heard of him by any other name than "Boy-over-the-river." Whenever I think of him, there is a picture in my mind of a barefooted boy, wearing half of a straw hat and no jacket, standing on the farther bank of a beautiful river, and pulling out of his trousers pocket a large silver watch with a heavy fob chain, to see whether he has been in swimming so long that he is likely to be late at school, while half a dozen companions are looking on with interest and admiration. I don't know why I always picture him thus; the real Boy-over-the-river may have been rich and well dressed for aught I know; but I suppose it is because the mind naturally delights in contrasts and antitheses.

Among the minor prizes of that mysterious bonanza, the only one I had ever actually seen was a rusty lock. A mere lock, picked up out of a pool of water, has no great importance or value. But when that lock is in the hands of a boy, and that boy is in school, and when he lifts the cover of his desk as a shield against the eyes of the master, and, using his knife for a screw-driver, takes the lock apart, exposing to view all its bolts and springs and tumblers, and tears a leaf out of his spelling-book to use in rubbing off the rust from the several parts, with

a view to putting the whole in working order—then it becomes intensely interesting, though the lock may have no key and the boy no treasures that require such security.

Not more surely was truth at the bottom of a well than wealth was at the bottom of the race. And to-morrow the water was to be drawn off, and nobody but Fred Crawford and me was to know anything about it!

There was an arrangement of long standing in our school, by which any pupil whose recitations through the day reached a certain point of excellence, was permitted to leave an hour before the close of the afternoon session. It was called "going home at three o'clock," but no boy was ever known to exert himself to earn the privilege unless he was bent upon going somewhere else than home.

On this particular Thursday when the water was to be drawn off from the race, Fred and I actually began study before breakfast, and I made that meal as short as possible, which caused my father to remark that "no people ever seemed to be so crowded for time as those that had the greatest part of life before them." At the tap of the bell we were in our places with a promptness that seemed to argue an insatiable hunger and thirst after knowledge. The boys at neighboring desks marvelled greatly when we resisted all temptations to gossip, or trade marbles, or consider plans for kites, or even to look at spirited representations of General George Washington on a prancing war-horse, laying about him with his sword, and cutting

off the head of a British soldier at every blow. This drawing was executed, as usual, by Gouldburn Hinks, the artist of the school. The teacher marvelled more, at the uniform excellence of our recitations. Fred and I perhaps marvelled most of all, at the fact that Sammy Whitney seemed to be doing the same thing that we were. We went up, up, up, in every class, until we were next to the head ; but there stood Sammy, and there was no getting above him, for he would not miss.

Three o'clock came at last, and with warm praises of our performance, and an assurance that he "felt certain we were determined to maintain this high standard every day hereafter," the teacher gave us three permission to go home.

"What are you going home for, Sammy?" said Fred, as soon as we were outside the door.

"I don't want to go home at all," said Sammy. "I thought I would like to go with you to the race."

"How did you know the water was let out to-day?" said Fred.

"Millicent told me," answered Sammy.

"I don't see how Millicent found it out," said Fred.

"I took good care not to tell her."

"Lucy told her," said Sammy.

"And did you tell Lucy?" said Fred, abruptly turning to me.

"No, indeed," said I. "Instead of that, I took pains

not to tell her, because I wanted to surprise her when I came home at supper-time with my pockets full of jewelry."

Fred was standing in a musing attitude, with his hand on one of the three heavy posts that divided the gateway to the school-yard, so that boys could pass through and cows could not, trying to think how the important secret had leaked out, when Sammy said: "Perhaps you don't want me to go with you?"

"Oh, yes, we do! Come along!" said Fred.

"Of course we do! The more the merrier," said I.

We had not really wanted anybody to share the adventure and the prizes with us. But Sammy was one of the best fellows in the world, and only one of the worst could have refrained, under the circumstances, from making him welcome.

It was half a mile from the school-house to the lower end of the race. We felt very much like running all the way; but Fred said that would attract too much attention, and somebody might follow us.

As we walked along, our talk was almost entirely of the treasures we expected to find, though Sammy was quite as much interested in the flume itself, and appeared to think it as romantic as any cave in the story-books.

"How shall we divide the things?" said I.

"I've thought about that," said Fred. "Of course, it would be right enough to let each fellow have what he

finds. But then if we should come to a diamond bracelet, and should all see it at the same time, we wouldn't want to snatch it from each other. I think it will be better to consider ourselves a company, and put everything we find into one bag, and then divide them fairly when we get through."

"That's a good plan," said I. "But suppose there should be only one watch. We couldn't all have it, and we couldn't divide it."

"We could sell it, and divide the money," said Sammy.

"Yes," said Fred, "or we could make up a table of values, and go by that. Say, two gold pens equal one gold finger-ring; three finger-rings equal one watch; two watches equal one diamond bracelet. Or we can have everything count a certain number, as the two sportsmen's clubs do when they have their annual hunt. Say, a gold-headed cane counts ten; a silver-headed cane counts five; a plated caster without the bottles counts two; a dog-collar counts four; a brass padlock counts four, and if the key is in it, five; a silver spoon counts six; a gold snuff-box counts forty; a claw-hammer counts two; a monkey-wrench counts four; a copper-bottomed tea-kettle counts three; an iron pulley counts two; a string of sleigh-bells counts two for each bell; a ladle to melt lead in counts eight; a good hatchet counts ten; a brass cog-wheel counts six, if none of the cogs are broken; an iron

boot-jack counts two; a glass inkstand with a silver top counts seven; a tin eagle counts one; a spy-glass counts eight; a drawing-knife counts four; a pair of scissors counts one; a pair of snuffers counts one; a brass door-knob counts three; a lady's tortoise-shell comb counts two; the buckle of a fireman's belt counts six; a major-general's epaulette counts ten; a horse-pistol counts fifteen; a revolver counts twenty-five; a plain-handled Damascus dagger counts twelve, but if it has a jewelled hilt, then it counts according to the jewels; a chisel counts five; a four-bladed knife counts twelve; a silver napkin-ring counts eight; a card-receiver counts nine; a horse-shoe counts one; a brass chain counts one for every five links; a crowbar counts—oh, we can't be bothered to carry a crowbar when we have so many more valuable things; a silver-plated stirrup counts six; a good riding-whip counts six; a pair of andirons with brass heads counts seven; a bird-cage counts four; a paper-cutter counts one; a watch counts seventy-five; a diamond bracelet counts a hundred."

"That's first-rate," said I. "Write it all down on a piece of paper, so that when we come to divide the things we needn't quarrel about any of them."

"We can't stop now to write it down," said Fred; "time's too precious."

"But where did you learn it all?"

"I studied it out when I was lying awake last night.

There's another way that you might like better ; it's more exciting."

"What way is that?"

"To spread the things all out, and then draw lots for first, second, and third choice. The fellow that gets the first choice picks out the one thing that he would rather have. Then the fellow that drew second choice picks one ; then the third fellow ; and so on around in regular turn, till the things are all gone."

I said I liked the exciting way best, and Sammy said any way that suited us would suit him. So we agreed to use the exciting method in dividing the treasures.

When we arrived at the lower end of the race, sure enough the cascade had vanished. Following Fred's leadership, we climbed down through an open space near the outlet, hung for a moment from a cross-beam, and dropped.

"I don't see how we can ever get back there again," said Sammy, looking up at the beam.

"We're not coming back this way," said Fred. "There will be plenty of ladders where the workmen have come in to make repairs. Don't be afraid ! Come on !"

"I'm not afraid," said Sammy ; "it's too late for that."

The inside of the great empty flume was dark and wet ; but we did not mind the dampness, and after our eyes became accustomed to it there was light enough from the cracks and openings to see all that we wanted to. The

floor was planked like the sides, except in certain places where it ran over a smooth bed of rock. Occasionally, where the floor was broken or uneven, there was a little pool, and these pools often contained fish. Sammy took out a handsome bass from one of them, but Fred told him to throw it back.

"There's no use in fooling with fish," said he; "we can catch those any day in the river. We are after more important game to-day."

So Sammy patted its head and stroked its back, and reluctantly placed it in the pool again.

As we looked up toward the head of the race it was like peering into an endless tunnel. Here and there a beam of light crossed the prism of darkness, and far away we could hear the sound of hammers and occasionally the fall of a plank. As we passed each mill we observed a square opening, closed by a heavy gate. Most of the gates were down, but we found one of them open, and walked through it to look at the great water-wheel.

Just as we resumed our journey up the race, Fred made an exclamation of delight, and ran to one side, where something shining like silver lay in a broken place in the floor.

"First find!" said he, as he lifted it and poured out the water.

It was a britannia teapot. The cover was gone, and the sides were battered a little, and the spout was closed as if

an ox had stepped on it. Nevertheless, it had evidently been elegant in its day, and Fred said he wasn't sure but it was solid silver. "At any rate," he added, "we can melt it and get out what silver is in it, and the lead will be useful to make sinkers."

He turned it over and over, and shook out all the water. Then he took out a bag that had been buttoned under his jacket, put the teapot into the bag, and slung it over his shoulder.

"How much would that have counted," said Sammy, "if we had not agreed to divide the things in the exciting way?"

"I should say that ought to count about fourteen," answered Fred. "You don't get a teapot like that every day."

The next prize was found by Sammy. It was a large iron cog-wheel, very rusty, nearly half of which was broken off and missing. Sammy ran to pick it up, but could hardly lift it. All of us together could not have carried it any great distance.

"If we had a hammer," said Sammy, as we stood contemplating it, "we could break it in pieces, and then carry them away and sell them for old iron."

"Not worth while," said Fred, "to burden ourselves with iron when we can get silver."

"How much would it have counted?" said Sammy, as he turned slowly away from it to resume the exploration.

"Oh, about—well, perhaps two," said Fred.

The next prize was also found by Sammy. It was a half-dollar, which was sticking up edgewise from the crack between two planks, and Sammy stubbed his toe against it.

"That's first-rate," said Fred. "Money counts as money."

"But I don't see," said I, after running over the problem on my fingers, "how we are to divide fifty by three."

"Some of us will have to find a cent," said Fred.

"But I thought we were going to share the things in the exciting way," said Sammy.

"So we are," said Fred. "But money isn't a thing. Money is money, and all we get of that we should divide equally."

Sammy and I agreed to this, and we walked on.

The next discovery was made by me. It was a large Newfoundland dog—dead, of course—under one of the mill-gates. The gate had been shut down on the body so that the head and shoulders lay in the race and the rest of it in the mill-flume. I turned aside to look at it.

"Oh, don't be wasting time on dead dogs," said Fred.

"But see here," said I; "this dog has left an estate, as father would say."

"What is it?" said they, coming up.

"There it is," said I, pointing to a collar and chain.

The collar was of steel, the brightness of which showed that it had not been long in the water. It was turned up at both edges in a serrated flange, and between these flanges was a belt of red morocco. It was fastened with a small padlock, and a brass chain was attached to it.

"That's good," said Fred. "Take it off."

We tried to lift the gate, but it was far too heavy, and we tried to pull the dog from under it, but he would not budge.

"We'll have to leave him alone, with his martial chain around him," said Sammy.

"No," said Fred, "we must have that. Uncle Silas has promised me a dog, and I want him to have just such a collar as that. But there's only one way to get it," and after considerable trouble he managed to pull the collar off over the dog's head.

"We didn't hurt the dog," said he, feeling that he must justify himself, though no one accused; "he was dead."

"Poor fellow! what a splendid dog he must have been," said Sammy.

"We've no time for sentiment," said Fred, hurrying on; "our golden harvest has only just begun."

"How much would it count?" said I.

"The collar alone counts four," Fred answered, "and the chain has fifty links, that counts ten—fourteen all together, just the same as my silver teapot."

We examined the collar carefully by the light of the next opening we came to, but we could find no name on it.

As we travelled on there were many false alarms, as one and another of us exclaimed at the finding of a prize that proved to be no prize. "An ivory-headed cane" turned out, on examination, to be a bone from a pig's leg. "A silver speaking-trumpet" was the spout of a tin coffee-pot, the body of which was under water in a dark pool. "A snare-drum" was a nail-keg, which the repairers had emptied and cast away. "A Japanese sword" was a broken scythe-blade. "A four-pound howitzer" was an old bedpost. "A roll of carpeting" was a length of rusty stove-pipe.

One thing, however, was genuine. Sammy, stopping to play with the fish in a pool, found therein a veritable gold bracelet. The clasp appeared to be broken, but otherwise it was good. We all came at once upon a horse-collar, which Fred and I, after some debate, rejected, on the ground that it was too cumbersome to be carried easily, was of no use to a boy, and probably could not be sold for cash. But Sammy insisted on carrying it along.

"John Steele," said he, "who used to be Uncle Richard's hired man, has had his barn burned and all his harness burned up in it. John has a wife and five children, and he used to give me lots of rides, and I am



A SEARCH FOR TREASURE.

going to take this to him." So he hung it around his own neck as the easiest way of carrying it.

Fred had been complaining for some time of gravel in his boot, which made him walk lame. Finding it no longer endurable he sat down, and, after much tugging, succeeded in getting it off and shaking out the gravel. But he found it impossible to get it on again. While he was still pulling and worrying at it, and saying unpleasant things about the shoemaker, his heel bulging out the leg midway, and the toe, inverted in the air before him, mocking him to his face—suddenly he found that, instead of sitting on a comparatively dry plank, he was in an inch or two of water.

"What does this mean?" said he.

"It means," said I, glancing toward the head of the flume, and seeing waves and ripples at every point where a beam of light came down through one of the openings, "that they are letting the water into the race, and we'd better get out of this just as quick as we can."

Fred stood up squarely on his feet, mindless of the position of his boot, and looked intently at the water. Presently a bright, new chip floated past.

"Yes, that tells the story," said he. "You see there is a current, and the water is growing deeper."

"Which is the shortest way out?" said Sammy.

"We must be about as far from one end of the race as from the other," said I.

"It would do us no good to be at either end," said Fred. "The shortest way out is straight up, when we can get a chance to travel in that direction."

"I think we'd better run for that place where the carpenters were at work," said I, "and go up their ladder. Though I don't see them there now."

By this time the water was more than ankle-deep, and it was not easy to run, especially for Fred.

"It's of no use," said he, standing on one leg, like a crane, and pulling off the offending boot. "I'll have a better pair next time. Good-by, boot!" and he threw it as far as possible.

"Why didn't you put it into your bag with the silver teapot?" said Sammy.

"I didn't think," said Fred, "but I don't care anyway. Come on, boys!" and he led the way with stumbling rapidity, hanging on to the bag over his shoulder as if it were a life-preserver, followed by Sammy with the horse-collar around his neck, looking like Saturn in his ring, and me with the dog-collar and chain over my arm.

It seemed miles to the next opening, where the carpenters had been at work. But we arrived there at last, only to find they had gone and had taken their ladder with them. And they had left no chance timber or plank of any kind that might have enabled us to climb out of the flume. We shouted with three-boy power, but nobody seemed to hear us.

The water was knee-deep, the strength of the current was increasing rapidly, and matters began to look serious.

"We can't get out here," said Fred. "We might shout all night and nobody hear us. I suppose the stupid fellows have gone home to supper."

It was not a time for any critical hearer to ask what there was stupid about going home to supper.

"Let us try the next opening," said Sammy, and he waded off up stream, we following. Fred stumbled against some obstruction on the bottom, and fell flat; but this was of little consequence when we were already more than knee-deep in water that was likely to be still deeper before we got out. We arrived at the next opening only to find no more facilities for getting out than at the first.

"If we could only have a beam or something to hang on by," said Fred, "we might stay here and rise with the water, till it gets high enough for us to climb out."

"We couldn't stand the current," said Sammy; "we should be swept down long before that."

"I remember," said I, "passing an opening where there was a slanting brace near the top. I noticed it because a bit of red rag had got caught on the wooden pin, and I thought at first it might be something that we wanted. If we could manage to reach the brace, perhaps we could climb out."

"It's a slim chance," said Fred, "but I can't think of any other. How far back is it?"

"I'm afraid it's a long way," said I.

"No matter," said Fred, "there's nothing else, and we must go as fast as possible. I'll throw away this thing; I don't half believe it's silver, anyhow," and he dropped his bag with the teapot in it."

I knew it was not silver, for I had read "Fairfield Britannia Company" stamped on the bottom.

Then he looked around at Sammy and said :

"You'd better cast off that old horse-collar."

"No, I guess not yet," said Sammy, and waded on.

It was a long distance, and when we arrived there we found the brace was beyond our reach. No fox ever sat and looked at the grapes on a lofty trellis more longingly than we three boys, standing in the water, now nearly waist-deep, looked up at that little diagonal beam.

Of course our first thought was for one to stand on the shoulders of the others. We tried this, Sammy and I forming the ladder for Fred to climb. When he stood on our shoulders, he could just reach the brace. Perhaps if he had been a good gymnast he might have climbed out; but none of us were very good gymnasts.

"It can't be done," said he, "we're fooled again," and he climbed down.

"I doubt it," said I, for I had been studying our resources while we were making the long journey. "Climb up again, take the dog-chain with you, put the end of it over the brace, and hook the bar through the nearest link

it will reach, letting the collar hang down at the lower end."

Fred did as I directed him.

"I could climb out now," said he, "and perhaps one of you could, if the other boosted. But the last boy couldn't unless he was mighty strong in his arms, for he could barely reach it."

"Well, we haven't completed our ladder yet," said I, as I lifted off the horse-collar over Sammy's head. "These collars are generally slipped off and on over the horse's head, but they are made to open at the bottom when necessary."

I tugged at the two buckles, and with some difficulty got it open. Fred came near ruining my plan by insisting upon cutting the straps, which would have rendered it useless; but I stopped him in time. Putting the horse-collar through the dog-collar, like one link of a chain through another, I buckled the ends together again, and our means of deliverance was complete. It was comparatively easy, by climbing first into the horse-collar, to put the hands and feet successively on the dog-collar, the loop of the chain, the angle of the brace, and the horizontal beam at the top, and thus climb out. Fred went first, I next. It was now dusk at the surface of the earth, and considerably darker in the race. We observed that Sammy seemed to linger, and a shudder ran through me at the thought that he might have fallen and been swept

down by the current. As we turned back, his head appeared just above the planking.

"Lend me a hand, both of you," said he.

We stood on either side of him, leaned over, and lifted him out almost by main strength. He seemed to use his arms well enough, but not his legs.

"What are you anchored to?" said Fred.

When we got him out we saw what he was anchored to. Standing on the brace, or sitting astride of it, he had managed to unhook the dog-chain and fasten it around his ankle, so that with him we pulled up both collars.

"I thought I'd like to save them," said he, as he sat down on the ground to undo the chain. "John Steele needs all the harness he can get."

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAUNCH OF THE IRIS.

WHEN Fred and I talked over the adventure in the race, we agreed that Sammy Whitney had shown more good points as an adventurer than both of us together.

"If he had not hung on to that old collar when I advised him to throw it away," said Fred, "none of us would have got out of that alive. Our white bones would now be lying at the bottom of the river, with the red coral-vines sprouting around them, as the poet says, and our hair turned into amber — though your hair is hardly yellow enough for that."

"I don't believe much coral grows in this river," said I.

"Well, in the lake, then," said Fred. "The current would easily carry us down to the lake in two or three hours."

"At any rate," said I, "the coral wouldn't be red. Coral grows white, and the manufacturers color it."

"Maybe you know more about it than the man that wrote 'The Sailor-Boy's Dream,'" said he.

"I know what the 'Book of Commerce' says about it," I replied.

Here was a direct conflict of authorities, and I don't know how we should have settled the coral question, had not the arrival of Sammy changed the subject. We were sitting on the stone steps that led up from the sidewalk to Mr. Crawford's front gate.

Sammy pulled from his pocket the half-dollar and the bracelet that he had found in the race.

"We forget all about dividing the things," said he. "I suppose we must have been a little excited."

"Yes," said Fred, "I noticed that both of you were. I don't know how it was with me."

"I haven't brought the dog-collar," said Sammy, "because I didn't know that I should find you. But we can draw lots and choose all the same."

Fred drew me aside, and said in a whisper that he thought we ought not to take any share of the things. The reason was plain enough, and I quickly agreed with him.

"We've made up our minds," said he, turning to Sammy, "that by good rights those things all belong to you, and we're not going to take any share."

"But we agreed to divide," answered Sammy, "no matter what we might find. And I believe in sticking to an agreement."

"That's all right," said Fred; "but if it had not been for you we never should have got out of that scrape alive. And, besides, you were the only one that found anything

valuable—that is, we don't exactly know whether my teapot was valuable or not, and at any rate I threw it away."

"It wasn't I that found the dog-collar," said Sammy; "and it's a beautiful one."

"Yes, I found that," said I. "But I abandoned it in the race, and you rescued it. If I had my 'Book of Commerce' here, I'd read to you all about flotsam and jetsam: then you'd understand the law."

Sammy was very reluctant to keep the things, notwithstanding our arguments; but presently a new idea seemed to strike him, and he said "All right!" in a way that indicated that he had thought of a plan by which he could make it satisfactory all round, but was not yet ready to divulge it. As for our adventure in the race, we were agreed that it would be as well not to tell anybody about it.

While we were examining and admiring the bracelet, and speculating as to the probable cost of repairing its clasp, along came Gouldburn Hinks. He carried a portfolio, and was whistling "A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sea." The portfolio was one that he had made himself, and he was rather proud of it. The sides were of heavy pasteboard, upon which he had glued, diagonally, strips of thin birch bark, placing them alternately with the white and the red side outward. The edge was bound with a narrow strip of blue leather, and the whole was varnished.

"That's a patriotic-looking portfolio," said Fred.

"Yes," said Gouldburn, "that's what I intended it for. But are you not going to the launch?"

"What launch?"

"At Dilloner's boat-yard. I heard about it yesterday, and this morning I saw the flag up, with Dilloner's streamer above it, and you know that always means a launch."

"It means a lunch, too, doesn't it?" inquired Sammy.

"Not always," said Gouldburn; "that depends on whether the boat has been sold before she leaves the stocks. But I'm not going for the lunch: I'm going to try my hand at sketching the scene."

As it was Saturday, and we were all at liberty, it required but a few minutes' discussion to determine us to go with Gouldburn to the launch.

On the way we saw two boys, who were travelling in the same direction as ourselves and carried two large leather straps and a hatchet. Fred and Gouldburn evidently knew them, and hailed them.

"They are the Ruyter boys," said Gouldburn, "Pete and Abe."

"Yes," said Fred, "old Ruyter is as rich as Croesus, and twice as stingy."

"I never heard that Croesus was stingy," said Sammy.

"Well, he was," said Fred, "as stingy as old Ruyter. And you can see how stingy *he* is by the way he dresses

those boys, and sends them after bark. Wasn't Crœsus stingy?" he continued, turning to me.

"I don't know," said I. "He isn't mentioned in the 'Book of Commerce.'"

"Is that the only book you read?" said Fred. "Well, what does the Bible say about him?"

"The Bible doesn't mention him," said Sammy.

Fred gave a sort of suppressed grunt, indicating that he had a very small opinion of books that didn't mention Crœsus. Then he referred again to the Ruyter boys.

"Just look at them," he said, "carrying two straps and only one hatchet. He had to furnish two straps, or they couldn't carry two loads; but he's too mean to let them have a hatchet apiece."

"They did have two hatchets," said Gouldburn, "but they lost one of them in the canal last week."

"At any rate," said Fred, "when I was berrying once, both of them were there; and they never ate so much as one berry, and they sold all they picked."

"Perhaps they don't like berries," said I.

"Not like berries!" said Fred. "Do you suppose Dutch boys are different from all other boys in the world? Does it say so in the 'Book of Commerce?'"

"It says the Dutch people are very frugal," said I.

"They may frugle berries, but they don't frugle fish," said Fred. "Why, a fish is first cousin to a Dutchman. The last time I was fishing at the Lower Falls, Pete

Ruyter was there, and he caught a magnificent string—twice as many as anyone else. And he sold all the big ones, and carried the little ones home. And yet old Ruyter smokes the longest pipe of any man in this town. Oh, he and old Cræsus would make a precious pair !”

Having thus demonstrated the extreme penuriousness of both Cræsus and Ruyter, Fred subsided into the silence of mental satisfaction. A few minutes later we caught up with the boys.

“Going to the launch ?” asked Gouldburn.

“No,” answered Pete, “going for bark.”

The bark referred to was the enormously thick bark of great oaken logs that surrounded the saw-mill connected with the boat-yard. Some were on the land, and some were floating in the basin. The basin was a large square excavation filled with water, opening into the canal. The logs had been brought down the canal in long, slender rafts. Sometimes half-a-dozen logs, which had formed a section of a raft, remained fastened together after being turned into the basin, offering a strong temptation to boys that were fond of navigation. Others floated about singly, and when a boy trusted himself on one of these he needed to be as agile as a circus-actor, for the log would roll almost as easily as an empty barrel. The bark of course had no value in the timber, and the mill-men were rather glad to have as much of it removed as possible before the logs were sawed. Very poor families

often sent their boys to cut it off and carry it home for fuel. Where the logs were on land, and the boy had a good hatchet, it was play rather than work to do this; but on the water there was great danger of a sudden ducking.

"Let's see your hatchet," said Fred.

Pete handed it to him, and he appeared to examine it critically.

"Where did your father buy this?" said Fred.

"We got no father," answered Pete; "our father was always dead since we remembered."

"Oh," said Fred. "I thought I saw him yesterday sitting on the steps and smoking his pipe."

"That was Uncle William," said Pete, "my mother's brother. He comes in this country last week, and he goes for Wisconsin to-morrow."

A curious expression passed over Fred's face, and he would not look at any of us.

"It seems that you will have to depend entirely upon Croesus," said Gouldburn, but he got no answer.

Dillon's boat-yard was a familiar place to us all. There were generally two or three boats building at a time. The yard was largely occupied by piles of timber, barrels of pitch, great iron kettles hung on low derricks, and kegs full of spikes. In one corner was a blacksmith's shop, where the iron-work for the boats was fashioned; and on the side next to the street was a large yellow

building, two stories high, with outside stairs, and an open belfry on one end. Surmounting the belfry was a tall flag-staff, from which now floated the Stars and Stripes, and above the flag was a graceful streamer, white bordered with blue, bearing the name J. P. DILLONER in red letters. At one side of the boat-yard was the great stone saw-mill, with its tall brick chimney.

At this time there were two boats on the stocks. One, half-finished, was by the edge of the canal; the other, just completed, was ready to be launched into the basin. Canal-boats were always built parallel with the water's edge, and launched sidewise. This could be done because they were built for capacity rather than speed, and had nearly flat bottoms, with no keel.

But a yard or two distant from the boat that was to be launched, and within the shadow that it cast in the sun, was a table made by laying a few planks on trestles, and covering them with a table-cloth. On this was spread a luncheon of sandwiches, cold chicken, doughnuts, cake, iced coffee, and lemonade.

Besides the workmen there were perhaps fifty people in the yard, including a dozen boys.

"She's a big one," said Gouldburn, as we stood by the new boat and looked up at it. "She's ninety-eight feet long, the biggest they ever build."

"Why don't they make it a round hundred?" said Sammy.

“Because the locks are just a hundred feet long,” answered Gouldburn, “and there has to be a little space at the ends.

On the side away from the water, where the supporting framework was highest, the deck of the boat seemed to be about as high as the eaves of an ordinary house. There was a ladder leading from the ground to the deck, and at its foot a workman stood on guard. His duty, Gouldburn told us, was to permit no one to go on board till the proprietor of the yard should arrive and ascend first, after which all that wished to go on were permitted to. Gouldburn, who seemed to understand these things, further told us that there were generally from a dozen to twenty persons standing on the deck when a boat slid into the water.

Sammy suggested that we all wait there for the arrival of the proprietor, and go on board ; but Gouldburn said he had come for the special purpose of sketching the scene, and he must be at some point a proper distance from the boat. We set out with him to find this point, and when he had found it he said he needed something to raise him a yard or two from the ground, so that he could see over the heads of the people, and get a good view. We looked about for something, and presently selected a barrel of pitch as the nearest and best thing. One of the heads had been removed, but none of the pitch had been taken out, and it was as hard and smooth as if it had

been a cake of black ice. Gouldburn said it was just the thing, and we rolled it to the exact spot indicated by him, stood it on end, and lifted him to his pedestal, where he stood, portfolio in hand, like a statue in a market-place.

A minute later three strokes of the boat-yard bell announced the arrival of the proprietor. He drove up to the gate with his wife and little daughter. The mother remained in the carriage, while the father and daughter alighted and went to the boat.

"I-r-i-s," said Sammy, spelling out the name that was painted in blue and gold letters on the stern. "What does that mean?"

I was unable to tell, and confessed my ignorance. Fred said he believed it was some sort of confection, but he didn't exactly know. We all turned to Gouldburn, who evidently felt that nothing but an immediate and satisfactory explanation was expected from him, or would be at all becoming to his character as the leader of the present expedition. He was staggered for a moment, looked hard at the word, and then said:

"It is not yet finished. The painter probably has not had time to add the last letter. When he puts on the H it will be all right. The name is *Irish*."

"Isn't that a strange sort of name for a boat?" said Sammy.

"No, I don't think so," answered Gouldburn. "She may have been built especially for the potato trade."

"Yes, or the pork trade," said Sammy. "I've often heard John Steele say something was 'as Irish as a barrel of pork,' and he ought to know, for he used to be Irish himself."

"The Irish are generally very quick," said I. "Perhaps this is to be a fast boat."

"Or it may be," said Fred, "that Mr. Dilloner intends to run for mayor at the next election, and wants to get the Irish vote. He is President of the Board of Education already."

Here we dropped the discussion, either because each of us was satisfied with his own explanation, or because the preparations for the launch were evidently completed.

Two workmen with heavy mallets were now seen to go under the boat and knock out all the stays except one. About a dozen persons had ascended to the deck, and the ladder was removed. The other spectators, including most of the workmen, were standing in little groups about the yard.

When all was ready, the proprietor gave the word to the foreman, and the foreman leaned over and spoke to one of the workmen with mallets, who immediately disappeared under the boat. A moment later the dull blows of his mallet were heard; then a murmur ran through the crowd as the hull began to move. The motion was rapidly accelerating, and when she reached the end of the

ways and plunged into the water of the basin, the proprietor and foreman waved their hats from the rolling deck, the spectators responded with three hearty cheers, the bell struck up a merry peal, the colors were dipped by a boy at the halyards, and two of the blacksmiths fired an anvil that gave a report like a heavy field-piece.

These sounds had hardly died away when one of a very different kind arose — a cry of alarm and distress. As I had chosen my seat high on the inclined plane over which logs were drawn up from the basin into the saw-mill, I was able to see the whole situation from the first. The two Ruyter boys had kept at their work of getting bark, which they made half play by going upon floating logs in preference to those on the land. Each was on a log in the basin at the moment of the launch. The commotion of the water when the boat dropped into it threw the younger boy from his log. At the same time, the proprietor's little daughter, who had left her father's side and gone to the edge of the deck that was toward the basin, was thrown off into the water.

Peter saw both accidents, and he was about equally distant from the two unfortunates. I saw him drop his hatchet and turn toward his brother, as if to plunge in that direction. Then he hesitated an instant, turned in the other direction, plunged, and swam to the little girl.

He told me afterward that he "remembered that Abram could a little bit swim," and he "saw there was

some plenty logs what he should catch hold of, but where the girl went down was no logs."

Peter was a good swimmer, and by the time those on the boat realized what had happened, he was treading water and sustaining the little girl with her head above the surface. The foreman jumped over to his assistance, and in a little while the three were safe on land.

But now arose another alarm, a strange cry for help. It was little Abe Ruyter's voice, but no one could tell where it came from. It seemed to come from beneath the water, but of course this was impossible.

When I saw him thrown over by the rolling of the log, and saw his brother swimming in the opposite direction, I started as fast as I could go for the other side of the basin. But when I arrived there he was not to be seen. Following his cry, however, I soon found him.

There was a section of a raft that had been left floating at that side of the basin, and little Abe, in rising from the bottom, had come up under it, and had happened to strike a place where there was sufficient space between two logs for his head to rise above the water, but not to permit him to climb out. The little fellow was not enough of a swimmer to go down again and come up outside of the raft, and was in sore distress, though in no immediate danger of drowning, as he was able to hang to the log easily.

His brother, swimming across, was the next to reach

him, but neither of us was able to extricate him. Peter remained by him, while I ran to the saw-mill for help, and one of the mill men came with an axe, cut the fastenings that held the raft together, and released the prisoner.

Abe had obeyed the old injunction to firemen, to "keep up a hollering," by which half of the crowd were attracted toward us, and by the time his brother drew him from the water, a considerable number were with us on the raft. When the fastenings dropped apart under the blow of the axe, two of the logs, as if tired of lying on one side, immediately rolled over, and five of the spectators just escaped being thrown into the basin. By this time the entire company had run to us, as well as all the mill men and everybody else that was in sight—all save one. Throughout all the excitement Gouldburn Hinks stood unmoved on his pedestal. When the clamor had sufficiently died away for his voice to be heard, he called Fred and me to come to him. I looked across, saw him standing there alone on his barrel in the centre of the boat-yard, and thought he must have been very much absorbed in his work of sketching to resist the temptation to go with the crowd.

A second call from him suggested, not by its words but by its intonation, that he was in trouble, and Fred and I hastened to him.

"I'm afraid I've got a permanent situation, boys," said he, as we approached.

“What’s the matter?”

“The matter is, that while I stood here sketching, the sun softened this pitch a little. You remember we got it from that shady corner over there. And as the heart of the barrel warmed, it fell in love with my boots, and now I can’t get away from it. I’ve done all the sketching I want to do in this boat-yard, and I’d be obliged if you’d find some way to get me out of it.”

“Why don’t you pull your feet out of the boots and jump to the ground?” said I; “we’ll manage the boots afterward.”

“I thought of that,” said he; “but it can’t be done.”

If he had been standing with one foot before the other, he might have pulled out the forward foot; though he would then have been at a loss for a place to plant that foot while he pulled out the other. But his feet were side by side, and neither could be pulled out unless the boots had been extremely loose.

“I don’t know what you’ll do, boys,” said he. “These are new boots, and I don’t like to cut them to pieces. But I don’t see any other way.”

Fred took out his knife.

“Hold on,” said I, “don’t be in a hurry to cut the boots.”

I got a small piece of thin board, and tried to dig him out; but the attempt was a failure. By this time two or three of the boat-builders had been attracted to the spot,

and one of them brought a spade. But this hardly made an impression on the pitch, which had been softened just enough to let the boots gradually sink into it, and to take hold of them with a vise-like grip, but not enough to allow any instrument to be thrust into it quickly.

"You'll have to roll home the barrel and the boy together," said one.

"We'll have to stand them in a kettle and melt them out," said another.

At this juncture another workman came up.

"I think I can get him out," said he, after examining the situation.

He ran to the shop and got a bucket, which he filled with cold water at the pump. Pushing through the crowd that by this time had gathered around the living statue, he poured the water into the top of the barrel, the surface of the pitch being two or three inches below the edge.

"Hold on ! hold on !" shouted several. "Cold water will make it harder !"

"That's just what I want," said he.

Three or four renewals of the water brought down the temperature of the pitch till it was as hard as a rock, and in this condition pitch breaks easily, with a conchoidal fracture.

The workman ran to the shop again, got a large cold-chisel and a hammer, and soon quarried Gouldburn out of

the pitch. The artist tumbled over into the arms of two boat-builders, with a great, rough, black mass clinging to the bottom of each boot. As he sat on the ground, the workman with his cold-chisel and hammer chipped off the greater part of it, so that he was able to stand upright and walk.

While thus imprisoned, he had had ample time to finish his sketch, even to the last letter of the boat's name—as he understood it.

When the excitement was over, Mr. Dilloner invited everybody to luncheon. His little girl, when taken from the water, had been immediately sent home in the carriage with her mother, and the foreman had also run home and put on some dry clothes. The Ruyters were as wet as the proverbial “drowned rat,” and heeded it as little.

The boys were not at all backward about going to the table. Mr. Dilloner himself found a good place for Peter and Abram, and asked them a great many questions about their home and their doings generally.

One of the workmen got hold of Gouldburn's sketch, admired it, and passed it round. At last it was handed to the proprietor. Mr. Dilloner looked at it with a great deal of interest, and began to praise it, when suddenly he noticed the name on the stern of the vessel, and burst out laughing.

“Whose work is this?” said he.

The foreman called Gouldburn and introduced him to the proprietor.

"My son," said Mr. Dilloner, "you appear to be a better draughtsman than speller."

"Why, what is wrong?" said Gouldburn.

"You haven't spelled the name of the boat quite correctly," said Mr. Dilloner, placing his finger on the word.

"I never saw *Irish* spelled in any other way," said Gouldburn. Then he thrust his hand into his breast-pocket and brought out a small diary or memorandum-book. He turned over the fly-leaves till he came to one that bore an advertisement of Irish linen letter-paper, and, placing his finger on the word, exclaimed triumphantly, "There it is, sir."

Mr. Dilloner laughed again.

"My son," said he, "that *is* the way to spell *Irish*, no doubt; but the name of the boat is *Iris*. That means a rainbow."

"Oh!" said Gouldburn, with a falling inflection. "I thought the painter hadn't quite time to finish it."

Then a great many of the workmen laughed, though I doubted if some of them understood the matter, and poor Gouldburn blushed.

"Never mind," said Mr. Dilloner, "I see you have pictorial talent, and I'll try to give you a chance to turn it to account. The next boat we build is to be a packet, and you may try your hand at decorating the cabin."

After the luncheon was disposed of, he asked the Ruyter boys to step into the office, when he wrote an order on a clothing store for a new suit for each of them. Peter explained it to little Abe as they were going out.

"I thinks a hatchet was more better," said Abe. "We get no more bark ; our both hatchets in the canal."

Mr. Dilloner, overhearing this, called them back, and wrote them an order on a hardware store for two hatchets.

CHAPTER V.

THE THING.

I WAS walking down to Gage's Hollow with Sammy Whitney when he drew a small paper-box from his pocket, opened it, took out something wrapped in white tissue-paper, carefully unwrapped it, and showed me a gold bracelet. It was the one he had found in the race.

"This looks like a new bracelet," said I, as I turned it over admiringly.

"Yes," said Sammy, "it does. You see I had the clasp mended, and the jeweller polished it all up. The half-dollar that I found that day just paid for it."

"That was cheap enough," said I.

"It was cheap," said he. "Couldn't be done in this town for twice the money. But I sent it out of town, to Uncle Harrison's shop in A——."

"When is your mother's birthday?" said I.

"Oh, not till next February," said he. "But I'm not going to give it to her. I made up my mind about it some time ago, and thought I ought to tell you, because really it partly belongs to you and Fred. I didn't want to go and sell it, for you and Fred said you would not

take any share. And I couldn't wear it, for you see it is a thing for a girl. But I haven't any sister, and you haven't any—except a big one. Fred's sister, Millicent, is the only girl among us. So it seemed to me the proper thing to do with it was to give it to her. It may be a little large for her just now, but she'll grow up to it. What do you say?"

"I say that's all right," said I. And yet it cost me an effort to say it, I did not know exactly why. It seemed right that Millicent should have the bracelet, but wrong that Sammy should give it to her; and it would have seemed right for him to give it to some other girl, but wrong for any other girl to have it. One minute I wished it had been I that found the bracelet, and the next minute I said to myself that it wouldn't have made any difference, for I should have done with it just what Sammy was about to do. And yet it seemed somehow as if it would have made a little difference. I could not tell what I really did think.

"How are you going to give it to her?" I inquired, after a pause. "Send it through the post-office?"

"No," said Sammy, "that wouldn't do. When they struck it with the stamp for the postmark, they would smash it. Father's cousin in Shardsville sent him his photograph once in a letter, and right across the cheek it says **HARD**, stamped in deep. Father laughs every time he looks at it, because his cousin is an insurance agent.

And once mother had a French clock sent to her by mail; and they knocked it all to pieces, and then made her pay letter postage. No, sir, this bracelet can't be trusted in the mail."

"I suppose you will go and carry it yourself," said I.

"No," said Sammy, "I wouldn't like to do that. I should be too bashful. And, besides, I believe it wouldn't be what they call the thing."

"What would be the thing?" said I.

"Well," said Sammy, "there are several the-things. I suppose it would be the thing to send a little nigger boy with it."

"But we don't know any little nigger boy," said I, "except Uncle Pete; and he's ninety years old, and all spattered with whitewash."

"I suppose he could clean himself up," said Sammy.

"Y-e-s," said I, slowly, beginning to fear that he would actually send it by Uncle Pete, and trying to think of some further objection to him. "But then he'd probably want you to buy him a pair of white kid gloves and a stovepipe hat for the occasion. It would be awful costly."

"No doubt it would," said Sammy.

"What else is the thing?" said I.

"They say that in some countries it would be the thing for me to dress up in disguise and put on a mask, and go to the door late at night and leave it myself."

"But Mr. Crawford might take you for a burglar

and shoot you," said I. "Or a policeman might arrest you before you got there."

"The policeman would be more likely to run away," said Sammy; "and I could choose some night when Mr. Crawford was out of town."

"But is this exactly the country where that is the thing?" said I.

"No," said Sammy, "it isn't."

"What else is the thing?" said I.

"I believe it is always the thing for a man to send such a present by his best friend," said Sammy. "At any rate, I think I read so in the 'Gents' Book of Etiquette.'"

"That sounds more civilized," said I.

Sammy was silent.

After a time I ventured to ask: "Which way do you think you'll choose?"

"I thought I would ask you to carry it for me," he answered.

"I should like to do it," said I; "that is—a—a—not as a little nigger, you know, but as a best friend."

"Why, of course," said Sammy; "as my best friend."

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRESENTATION.

WHEN Sammy handed me the box containing the bracelet, he appeared to think that the whole matter was settled and every contingency provided for. And it seemed so to me too, until I took a second thought, when such vast and varied possibilities presented themselves to my mind's eye that I was appalled. It was easy to say, "Take this, as my best friend, and present it to Millicent Crawford." But the presentation could not be made in a general and off-hand way ; it must be on some particular day, at some particular hour, and in some particular manner. What day ? What hour ? What manner ? I was not obliged to run right off and present it the very day I received it, of course ; there were several days, in any one of which the event might take place ; and it might be at any one of a dozen hours. Sammy had spoken of going with it himself some day when Mr. Crawford was out of town, and I quickly arrived at a determination to choose such a day for my adventure ; and if Mrs. Crawford could also be absent, and only Fred and Millicent at home, it would be all the better. But this was too much

to hope for. As to the hour, it seemed to me that nearly all the romantic things I ever heard of occurred in the evening, and in the evening I was not likely to be seen by boys who would ask too many questions. Plainly, evening was the true time.

The really troublesome problem was that concerning the manner of presentation. I tried to recall the particulars of presentations that I had heard or read of. There was nothing on the subject in the "Book of Commerce," and I had never witnessed any presentation except of rewards of merit at school. I remembered hearing my father read an account of the presentation of the freedom of some city to General Kossuth, and tried to think how that could be adapted to the present case. Kossuth was presented with a paper thing in a gold box, and I was to present a gold thing in a paper box; thus far the likeness between the two occasions was very close and gratifying. But beyond that point I found no help from Kossuth's experience; the flags of all nations, the bands of music, the lord mayor's staff, and the ladies in the Parisian dresses—these bewildering things of course had no place in our ceremony. Then the thought came up, "Are there not corresponding things that would be proper, which you ought to have?" and the more I turned it over in my mind, the more I couldn't tell.

I next recalled an account I had read of the presentation of a silver trumpet to the foreman of Fire-Engine Com-

pany, Number Three. That was a rather brilliant affair in some respects, but it seemed to me it ended in too much beer-drinking to furnish a fit model for my purpose. There was one thing about it, however, that I truly admired—the rhetoric of the second assistant foreman, who made the presentation speech. He closed with the words: “And whenever your eye shall rest upon the graceful outlines or delicate tracery of this token of esteem, may your thoughts revert with pleasure to this auspicious occasion.” I thought I would get the dictionary and find out what “auspicious” meant, and if it was all right, perhaps I could not do better than to model my speech on the assistant foreman’s.

Last of all came the thought that should have come at first—to consult my sister, who was eight years older than I and knew everything. But I resolved to get the information from her, if possible, without letting her know what I wanted it for.

“Lucy,” said I to her that evening, “did any fellow ever present you with a gold bracelet or anything?”

My sister blushed a little and hesitated a little, and then said: “No, not exactly.”

“Not exactly?” said I. “How is that? Did he think he would, and then change his mind? How far did he get? Did he have the bracelet in his pocket, and was he afraid to take it out because father was at home? Had he begun his speech? And did he break down?”

These rapid and eager questions surprised my sister, who, instead of answering them, inquired why I wanted to know.

"Oh, you see," said I, suddenly assuming an indifferent manner, "I have been thinking lately about the various kinds of presentations—Kossuth's freedom of the city, you know—and foreman of Number Three, silver trumpet—and—and all the others, you know. I was thinking when they did it, and where they did it, and how they did it, you know; and I—I wondered whether they presented a gold bracelet in the same way. That's all. If you don't care to tell me how yours was presented, or almost presented, no matter. I—I merely inquired."

"Yes," said she, "I thought you were merely inquiring; and I don't mind telling you that the gold bracelet you inquire about was a diamond ring."

"That will do just as well," said I. "How was it presented, or almost presented?"

"It was sent to me in a letter," said Lucy, "and I sent it back by the next mail."

"Oh, dear!" said I, "that won't do. Ours can't go by mail, and it mustn't come back at all."

"Who are we? and what is ours?" said Lucy.

"Why," said I, perceiving with some embarrassment that I had betrayed myself—"we are Sammy Whitney and I, and ours is a gold bracelet."

"Where did you get a gold bracelet?" said she.

"At the race," said I.

"But I thought father had forbidden your going to the races?"

"He never said anything about it."

"The bracelet must have been lost by some lady among the spectators," said she. "Why did you not inquire for the owner?"

"There were no spectators," said I, "nor any ladies in sight."

"No spectators at a horse-race?"

"I didn't say a horse-race—I mean the mill-race. We found it in that, the day they drew off the water."

"May I see the bracelet?" said she.

I drew it from my pocket, unwrapped the paper that I had carefully rolled about it to keep the box clean, and handed it to her.

"The design is very pretty," said she, as soon as she had opened the box and clasped the bracelet round her own wrist.

"Do you think we should try to find the owner?" said I. "And if we do find her, ought she to pay us back the half dollar we paid for mending it?"

My sister held the bracelet up to the light and examined it very closely.

"No," she said, "I think you need not try to find the owner."

The first sensation produced in my mind by this an-

nouncement was joy, for I feared we ought to search diligently for the owner, and might be successful ; but the second was disappointment, for I could think of but one reason why my sister should advise me not to seek for the loser of the bracelet, and that was suggested by her critical examination of it.

I was about to ask her if she had discovered that it was not gold, but checked myself through timidity. If it was not, I did not wish to know it and have all the romance ruined ; I preferred to cling to my original innocent belief. And, besides, if I learned that our gold was brass, I should feel obliged to tell Sammy, and that would destroy his pleasure in the find. Furthermore, sister Lucy was not a jeweller, and she might be mistaken.

“ I should be glad if you would tell us the best way to do it,” said I.

“ To do what ? ”

“ Oh, I forgot that I had not told you. We are going to present it to a lady.”

“ What, both of you ? ” said she, apparently a little surprised.

“ Yes, both of us. You see, we found it together, and own it in partnership—in fact, there is another boy in the partnership ; and boys can’t wear bracelets, you know ; and you could not divide this into three pieces, and she is an awful pretty girl ; it may be too large for her, but she’ll grow up to it ; and—and, you see, she is the sister of one

of the boys, and another did most of the finding, and so the third boy is to do most of the presenting—in fact, all of it—and—I am that last boy ; and she is the nicest girl in the whole school, and I am anxious to know how to do it just right.”

“ I should suppose,” said my sister, “ that three boys who had such exact ideas about dividing the ownership and the responsibility would not be likely to get far out of the way in the presentation.”

“ That’s all very well,” said I ; “ but, really now, how would you go about it ? Would you wait till you caught her alone ? ”

“ Is she older than you, or younger ? ”

“ Younger.”

“ Then I think I would not try to catch her alone.”

“ Would you go right to her very house ? ” said I, somewhat appalled at the idea of encountering her mother, and perhaps even her father.

“ I certainly should,” said she ; and I felt much as one feels when the dentist tells him that a large molar tooth must come out. Then my mind ranged over other possibilities. I thought if I could meet Millicent and her mother somewhat accidentally, at a picnic, where manners are a little easier than in a parlor (at least for boys), I could manage it. Or it might be nice to hand it in at the door, on Christmas-eve, and ask her mother to put it into Millicent’s stocking. Or I might make a sealed

packet of it, and ask her to keep it till she was five years older, and then open it on her birthday. But no picnic had been planned that I knew of, and Christmas was a long way off, and five years would be an eternity to bury such a treasure.

"The fact is, Lucy," said I, "it has fallen to the bashfullest boy of the three to make this presentation."

My sister remarked that the others must be bold fellows indeed, which was one of those needless sarcasms that sisters are always throwing at brothers—I suppose it is a sort of target-practice with them—and I paid no attention to it.

"How would it do to put it in writing?" said I.

"And then get the speech by heart?" said she.

"Oh, no! I would make a call at the house, and leave the box and the note."

"It would depend on how it was written," said she.

"Suppose you write the note and show it to me first."

"Do you remember," said I, as I was getting the pencil and paper, "how the assistant foreman of Number Three presented the silver trumpet?"

"No," said she, "I do not."

So I stood up and repeated a part of his speech, with the appropriate gestures and intonations.

"That was very good, in its place," said she, and something in her manner of saying it seemed to imply that it would not be very good in any other place.

"But you don't think," said I, catching at her meaning, "that the assistant foreman of Number Three is exactly what they would call a standard author?"

"No, not exactly," said she.

"Are there any such speeches or notes in standard literature?" said I.

"Yes, a few," said she; "but if I were you I would not imitate them."

"It would be better to be original, wouldn't it?"

"Much better."

"Do you think prose or poetry would be best for such a presentation?"

"You might try both," said she, "and we will see which appears most successful."

While my sister silently worked at a piece of embroidery, I forged away for two hours, spoiling a great many sheets of paper, and at last produced both the prose note and the poem, to my satisfaction. When I doubted about the spelling of a word, I asked her; and afterward she put in the punctuation.

"Now they are finished," said I, "and I hope you will really like at least one of them. Which will you hear first?"

"The prose," said she. So I read:

The undersigned sends his compliments to Miss Millicent Crawford, and begs leave to present the following gold bracelet, which was discovered by him and two companions while exploring the

dark recesses of the great flume, the day the water was drawn off, in search of adventures and treasure. It was the most beautiful thing they found, and is hereby offered in their behalf to the fairest lady of their acquaintance.

“How does that sound?” said I.

“It sounds at once business-like and romantic,” said she. “Now let me hear the poem.” I read:

When the gold was in the mine
And the water in the sky,
When it hadn't begun to shine,
And the river-bed was dry—
Where, oh where, were you and I?
Nowhere—nowhere!

When the gold became a brace
For a lovely lady's wrist,
And the water filled the race,
And the jewelry was missed,
Where then was the golden grist?
At the bottom—at the bottom.

When three knights of high enterprise
Travelled through the dusky flume,
There it met their wondering eyes,
Like a dandelion in bloom.
And they brought it out for whom?
Millicent—Millicent!

Take the token we present,
As its history I unfold,
And therewith be thou content.
Though we're often wisely told
All that glitters is not gold,
Some is—some is!

When I had finished the reading of these verses, Lucy was silent for some time. She appeared to have reached a very difficult spot in her embroidery, and was obliged to hold it close to her face.

“How do you like it, sister?” said I.

“Better than the prose,” said she, and she seemed to choke with emotion.

“I hope,” said I, “it is not too much of a license to say ‘brace’ for ‘bracelet.’ I thought it was better than to say ‘racelet’ for ‘race,’ and I had to do one or the other.”

“Much better,” said she.

“I had no idea,” thought I to myself, “that I was writing such an affecting poem. Then,” said I, “you would send that, I suppose?”

“By all means,” said she.

I took infinite pains to make a nice, clean copy of the poem; and when I imitated her punctuation it looked as if the commas and periods were painted instead of written. When I considered how handsomely my sister had complimented the prose, and that she had then said she liked the verses even better, I felt sure it must be a mighty good poem. The task of presentation was growing easier to my mind. In fact, I began to be in a hurry for the final scene.

The next evening, having put the poem into an envelope, carefully addressed it, and then tied it to the box

with a narrow ribbon that my sister gave me, I set out for the home of the Crawfords.

I was ushered into the library, where Mrs. Crawford sat alone, reading a newspaper.

"Is—is Fred at home?" said I, after I had been seated.

"No," said Mrs. Crawford, "he is not ; he has gone with his father to see a panorama of the Mississippi River."

"That's too bad," said I—"I mean it's too bad for me. Of course it's nice for Fred." And then we talked about panoramas and the Mississippi River, until my knowledge of both subjects was exhausted. Then I talked about other rivers that I should think would be good subjects for panoramas ; and Mrs. Crawford quoted something that Washington Irving had written about the scenery of Snake River ; and then I was going to talk about snakes, but I checked myself on reflecting that it would hardly be nice to come on such a pleasant errand and then talk about such unpleasant things as snakes. But we had used up all the panoramas and all the rivers, and I knew nothing about Washington Irving. So I was silent for awhile, until I mustered up courage to say : "Is Millicent at home ?"

"She is at home," said Mrs. Crawford ; "but she took a little cold, and had a headache, and so she has gone to bed early."

"That's too bad," said I—"I mean it's too bad for me—oh, and of course it's too bad for her too. I—I suppose I couldn't leave it?"

"Leave what?"

"Why, leave the bracelet, you know—and—and—the poem. Because, you see, I came here not as a little nigger, but as Sammy's best friend."

"I don't know about any bracelet," said she.

"Oh! I supposed Fred had told you about the gold bracelet that we found in the race. But, if he hasn't, there's a poem here that explains it all." Whereupon I gave her the packet, and got myself out of the house somewhat precipitately.

I walked home thinking what very bad luck I had met, not seeing Millicent or even Fred, when I had pictured to myself a probability of finding them playing checkers or something of that sort, and having the presentation scene come in just right and pass off gracefully and quietly among ourselves alone. I heard about it next day from Fred.

"At first," said he, "mother was not going to let Millicent keep it. But then she took another look at it, and examined it very carefully, and said she might keep it. I guess, when she thought it all over, she must have made up her mind that it was too valuable to let go."

"I am glad she thought so," said I, remembering the doubts that had risen in my mind. "But, Fred, how—how did the poem suit?"

"Oh, splendidly! Father said it was worth more than the bracelet. And I think he must be a good judge, for he has a great deal of poetry in his library."

"And your mother?"

"Mother said it was the most original poem she had seen in a long time, and she should take care to preserve it till Millicent is old enough to appreciate it."

"Then she can't appreciate it now?"

"I should think not," said Fred. "I heard mother trying to explain it to her, and at every verse she burst out laughing."

"Who burst out—Millicent?"

"Oh, no!" said Fred. "Millicent was as sober as a deacon. It was mother that burst out."

"I see," said I, "she was laughing at Millicent for not understanding the poetry."

"Probably," said Fred.

I should have felt more comforted if he had said "Certainly." Two days later Sammy showed me a letter of acknowledgment:

Deer Samy

That was a real pretty braslit you sent to me bye your best frend he is a nise boy if he does think he is like a littel niger and Mama says he is very bashfull but I had a hedake and went to bed erly and Mama gave it to me in the morning and I doant want you to go in any more rasis if they are piled full of braslits it must be dark and dredfull

Millicent crawford

Mama says I may send this throw the pow stofis with a real stamp on it

I thought this was a pretty letter as far as it went; but I should have liked it better if it had made some mention of the poem. I began to wish that I had found the bracelet and Sammy had written the verses. It was but a repetition of the old experience, that no actor is ever satisfied with his part. I did not know that Sammy wished in his heart that I could have found the trinket and he could have made the presentation.

CHAPTER VII.

SAMMY'S BOWLDER.

AGES ago, scientific men tell us, the portion of the earth where many of us now live was covered with a great sheet of ice, which was in slow but continuous motion. It was enormously heavy and powerful, and wherever it passed over a ledge of rock it broke off pieces, of all shapes and sizes, and pushed them along under itself, breaking them, grinding them till all the corners were rounded, rolling some of them in their own dust and sand till they were polished, and finally, when the geological conditions had changed and the ice-cap disappeared, leaving them strewn by millions over the face of the country. The largest of these stones are called bowlders, smaller ones cobble-stones, and the smallest, pebbles. One that weighed three or four hundred pounds was left by the great glacier on a spot that centuries afterward became the backyard of Mr. Whitney's house. This bowlder was of white stone, probably quartz, and very smooth. If you should cut off a short length of a large log, sharpen one end to an edge like an axe, and lay it on its side so that this edge would be perpendicular, it would come

pretty near the appearance of the boulder, except that the upper side must be flattened considerably. The only tree in the yard, a large, dilapidated plum-tree, overhung the stone, and shaded it at noonday.

The boulder was a pet with Sammy ; in fact, it might almost be called his favorite companion. If he wanted to mend a broken iron of his sled, he heated it in the kitchen fire, and then, with the red-hot iron in one hand and his hammer in the other, ran out to the boulder and used it as an anvil. When he wanted to make leaden sinkers for his fish-lines, he pounded the metal into shape on the boulder. There was one corner of it on which he sharpened knives and other tools, and another on which he rubbed brass and copper things to polish them. He drilled a hole in it, to make it useful for bending rods and heavy wires, and made it convenient in many ways as a sort of work-bench. Often when he wanted to think, and sometimes when he wanted to read, he used to go out and sit on the boulder. When he was very small, he called the great stone Billy Booly, and the name had stuck to it. A few years later—in a lonesome afternoon, when all the boys of the neighborhood had gone to the circus, but his father would not let him go—he used a broken three-cornered file for a graver, and managed to carve the name rudely on the side of the boulder. It was all he could think of to do with himself that day. The stone furnished him with several choice similes. I have often



BUBBLES AND A BOWLDER.

heard him speak of things as being "as hard as Billy Booly's heart," or "as steady on its feet as Billy Booly."

But there must have been times when he thought he could mention hearts that were even harder than a quartz boulder, and times when it seemed that nothing was too secure to roll from its foundation in a moment.

The next time that I went to see him, after the bracelet presentation, I found him sitting on the boulder. He held a pipe in his hand, there was a bowl of suds beside him, and he was looking up through the branches of the plum-tree, apparently in deep study.

"Hello, Sammy! What are you thinking of?"

"I was thinking of bubbles."

"What about bubbles?"

"I was thinking how beautiful they are when the sunlight strikes them, and yet how soon they burst and go into nothingness."

"Of course they do," said I. "That's what they're for—at least, everybody speaks of them in that way. I suppose they are what the teacher calls a figure of rhetoric."

"But I was thinking," said Sammy, "that there ought to be some way to make a permanent bubble—one that wouldn't burst, you know, nor ever lose its beauty."

"A sort of iron bubble," said I. "Well, why don't you try cast-steel soap?"

Sammy looked up at me inquiringly, not at once comprehending that I was jesting. Then he smiled just enough for politeness, and immediately went back to his serious idea.

"There must be some way to do it," said he—"there must be some way."

"I don't see how you can think that," said I, "when it's as plain as can be that they are the very frailest things you can make. If they were tough enough to stand kicking around like a foot-ball, you couldn't blow them. I believe," said I, bringing my hand down upon the bowl-der, "that of all things that are not nothing, they are the nothingest."

"How about the image of your face in the looking-glass," said he, "isn't that pretty near nothing?"

"Yes, it is," said I. "It's as nothingy as a soap-bubble."

"Well," said Sammy, "you know a Frenchman found out a way to make that permanent, and they call it a daguerreotype."

"That's so," said I. "You may do the bubble problem yet."

Then Sammy dipped his pipe into the bowl and blew an enormous bubble. As he tossed it off, it glistened in the sun, reflecting all the colors of the rainbow from its polished sides. It rose slowly and gracefully, eddied about for a time, as if uncertain which way in all the wide

world it was best to go, and then made a sudden rush toward the old plum-tree, and wrecked itself against the topmost branch.

"There must be some way," said Sammy, musingly, as he looked intently at the spot where the beauty had disappeared; "there surely must be some way."

"What would you do with your bubbles, if you could make them as tough as pumpkins?" said I.

But the question was never answered, for at that moment Babington Bantel (whom the boys called Babbity Ban) came running into the yard.

"W-w-what are you fe-fe-fellows d-d-doing?" said he.

"Principally nothing," said Sammy.

"Well, if you w-want to k-quit that, and go to doing s-s-something, I can t-tell you how to make your ever-l-last-ing f-fortune."

"I think we're always ready for that," said I.

Babington pulled from his pocket a juvenile paper that was printed and published by boys in a town about a hundred miles away.

"Just look at that!" said he, pointing to a large-type announcement in the first column. "I n-know 'em all. Used to l-live there myself. F-f-four brothers print it—t-t-two pair of twins."

The announcement was to the effect that the enterprising publishers would pay the liberal sums of five and three dollars respectively for the best and next best story

that should be sent to them within a month, and fifty cents for the best poem.

"Oh, they'll p-pay," said Babington, "they're s-sure to pay! I know 'em. And if I could write as good c-c-compositions as you f-f-fellows, I'd just th-think up a good st-story, and get some of that m-money. But I can't st-stop any longer now; mother sent me on an er-rand in an aw-aw-awful hurry."

Just before he disappeared around the corner of the house, he looked over his shoulder and shouted:

"G-g-go in for it, boys! g-g-go in for the st-st-stories! Never mind the pup-pup-poetry!"

"What do you say to that?" said I, as soon as I could get my breath after Babington's startling announcement.

"Let me look at the paper again," said Sammy, and I handed it to him.

He slowly and carefully re-read the offer of prizes, and then turned to the other columns and read large portions of them aloud.

"I think we ought to try it," said he.

"Do you mean," said I, "that we ought to work together and write one story, so as to make sure of the first prize?"

"I didn't think of that," said he. "I supposed each would write his own story and take his chances."

"Then perhaps we can get both prizes," said I.

"Perhaps so," said he, "and I shall not mind it if mine is the second."

"I suppose," said I, "that we'd better not tell each other anything about them till we have finished them. It might be confusing."

"Of course not," said Sammy; "but when we have them ready to send off let us meet here at the boulder and read them to each other."

I agreed to this, and we parted, I going home with my head full of those large notions that generally come from a lack of concrete ideas.

CHAPTER VIII.

WRITING PRIZE STORIES.

THE next day was Saturday, and I determined that I would give the entire day, if necessary, to the writing of my story, lay it away over Sunday, get it out and read it Monday morning, and see how I liked it.

When I went to breakfast and found that we had fish, I was delighted. "That is fortunate, that's encouraging," I said to myself; for I had heard that fish furnishes the necessary material for brain. I therefore ate as much fish as possible, but kept my reasons to myself. "A good preparation is half the battle," said I. Suddenly another thought struck me, and I was overcome by a fear that I had made a fatal mistake.

"Father," said I, "are all the brains alike?"

"It is difficult to see how they can be," said he, "when the characters of people differ so much."

"I don't mean exactly that," said I. "I was thinking of the different brains, or the different parts of the brain, in one man's head. Don't you cipher with one part, and sing with another part, and plan a house with another part, and so on?"

"I don't exactly believe in bumpology," said he; "but I think there can be no doubt that the several parts of the brain serve various purposes, as you say."

"And do you know which fish is for which?" said I.

"Fish? I don't understand you," said he.

"Why," said I, "if you were going to do some awful hard sums in algebra, you wouldn't eat the same kind of fish that you would eat when you wanted to write a poem, would you?"

Father laughed a little, and answered, "I think I would eat any kind that I was fond of, and take my chances."

I was glad to see that he took my question to be merely one of curiosity, and did not follow it up by inquiring what intellectual work I had on hand.

At first his remark was very comforting, but as I walked slowly upstairs, thinking it over, I saw it in another light. It was evident that father really knew nothing about it, and, therefore, it was not probable that anybody knew much about it. I had just eaten an enormous quantity of striped bass, and who could tell what the effect would be? Perhaps I had unconsciously prepared myself for singing a comic song, or discovering a new planet, instead of for writing a prize story. Indeed, it might be that I had overdone the business altogether, and should have brain fever. It seemed to me that my head really was growing hot.

Then I remembered the story of the physician who, during an epidemic of a new and dreadful disease, purposely took it, shut himself up, and carefully wrote down all his symptoms, so that other physicians could learn from his case how to treat the malady. I had never kept a diary, but this seemed a good time to begin. So I folded a sheet of foolscap paper into the form of a small book, fastened it with a pin through the back, and cut open the leaves. After carefully placing the date at the top of the first page, I wrote:

"For breakfast ate three large helps of striped bass; small quantities of potato and bread; coffee rather strong, middling amount of sugar. Went upstairs after breakfast, and immediately began to write my prize story."

"There," I said to myself, "now if I die of brain fever just as I finish the story, authors who come after me will know whether to eat striped bass for that sort of work, and how much it is safe to take at a meal. I have heard father say that every man ought to do something for his profession. If the story should be a great success, of course they will try experiments with other kinds of fish, and perhaps I shall be the pioneer in a famous discovery."

Then I got a new, clean bunch of foolscap, dipped my pen into the ink, and—didn't write anything, because just at that moment I couldn't think of anything in particular to write.

"No wonder," said I, "the condition of this table is very confusing."

So I laid down my pen, and put things in order on the table, removing an old newspaper and a broken saucer which I had used for paint, piling up the four books in a very exact pier, at one corner, throwing the spotted pen-wiper into the drawer, and dusting the whole surface with my handkerchief.

"There," said I, "now a fellow can write in some comfort." I dipped my pen again very deliberately, and sat looking intently at the white paper. But no words sprouted out of it.

"This paper is too large," said I. "It will take a long time to fill such a big page. It would be more encouraging to have smaller pages, and turn them off faster."

I folded the sheets, taking great care to bring the corners exactly together, and cut them neatly in halves. I dipped the pen again, and again sat looking intently at the white field of reduced dimensions, but still nothing sprouted. After a time I contemplated cutting the sheets again in half, but quickly rejected that idea as a "baby game" unworthy of a boy of my size.

Presently my eye wandered from the paper and rested on a tray with several pencils in it. One was a slate pencil and was very dull. My eye seemed unable to get away from it, and I thought of all the discomforts of a dull pencil till I became quite unhappy about it.

"Nobody can make a sharp, handsome figure with such a pencil as that," said I, "or tell just where the figure will appear, or keep it on the track in writing."

I laid down the pen, got out my knife, and proceeded to sharpen the pencil with great care and exactness. While I was doing this, an idea struck me, the central idea for a story, suggested by what I had said to myself about the pencil.

"Striped bass is probably the correct thing, after all," said I, enthusiastically; but I continued to work with the knife till I made a very perfect pencil. Then I took up the pen once more, and began to write:

"Once there wa——"

A long, low whistle, with a peculiar quaver at the end, came in from the street.

"That's Gouldburn Hinks!" said I, "and I want to see him about his new dog!" Whereupon I dropped the pen, rushed out of the room, and slid down the stair-railing. During the slide I thought it all over—perhaps because the large quantity of striped bass had quickened the action of my brain—and as I shot over the top of the newel post and lighted on my feet, I said:

"No, sir! this won't do! You must go right back to your work, and stick to it, and let Gouldburn and his dog go till some other time."

But I could not resist the temptation to go to the narrow window beside the door, pull aside the curtain a lit-

tle, and peep out. There was Gouldburn in plain sight, but no dog with him. So I was content to turn and go upstairs again.

"Now, what was I going to write?" said I to myself, as I resumed my seat and took up the pen, which had made a large and interesting blot where I dropped it on the paper. "What—was—I—going—to write? I can't recall what I was going to write. That dog, or that boy without a dog, has broken the thread of the narrative, as father says."

I looked around for another pencil that needed sharpening, but did not find one. Then it occurred to me that I ought to remove the blot, and this would occupy me while I was recalling and re-arranging my ideas. I took out my knife, and proceeded to scrape it from the paper.

"This blot is exactly the shape of a cow," said I, "a cow somewhat frightened; and that other little blot is the shape of a hound. Oh, I have another idea! and now my first idea comes back! and now I see through the whole story!—well, not quite all, but most of it."

Whereupon I took up the pen and wrote two pages and a half without stopping. Then I came to a dead halt; for though I seemed to have ideas beyond that point I could not clearly see what order they should take, or make a decisive choice as to what should come next.

"I wonder," said I, musingly, "if it would be best to make a skeleton of the story first," and before I realized

what I was about I had drawn a picture of a human skeleton on the blank half of the third sheet.

"I suppose some of that striped bass flew to the physiology part of my brain," said I, as I made preparation for a clean copy of the half page. When that was done, I seemed to get a little more light, and wrote slowly through three more pages. Then mother called me and said she wanted to send me on an errand to the other side of the river. I thought this was very unfortunate, but saw no way to escape the errand except by revealing what I was at work upon, and this I was determined not to do in any case. So I hastily rolled up the manuscript, stepped to the closet, and carefully hid it in one of my Sunday boots.

The errand was a long walk for a boy; but it took me past the railroad yard where they made up freight trains, and I stopped there and looked at the cars, and got some more ideas for my story. Thus I went home happy, not altogether regretting the interruption of the writing.

As soon as possible I returned to my task, full of the new ideas. But when I went to the closet for my manuscript, the Sunday boots were gone! I looked in every place that I could think of, but they were nowhere to be found.

"Mother," said I, at last, "do you know what has been done with my Sunday boots?"

"Oh, yes," said she, "I lent them!"

"Lent them! — lent my boots?"

"Don't be alarmed, my son; they will not be hurt. Mrs. Bantel came along and stopped here on her way down town with Babington, to have his picture taken. She always tells everything, whether it is relevant or not, and she told that the boy was worrying because his boots looked rather worn and crumpled. 'I d-d-don't mind wearing them,' said he, 'but who wants such b-b-boots in a pup-pup-portrait?' Of course I knew the boots would not show much in the picture, but I sympathized with the boy (rather more than his mother did, I think), and so I offered to lend him your Sunday boots. I saw they were rather large for him, but I presume he got along well enough. He will return them before you need them."

"I need them this very minute," said I.

Mother looked somewhat surprised, and asked for an explanation.

"I can't tell you," said I, "but I give you my word for it I need those boots *awfully*."

"You might walk out and meet them," said she; "they are probably on their way home by this time."

I did walk out, but did not meet them. I went to every picture-gallery in town — no sign of them. I looked in at Mr. Bantel's place of business — they were not there. Then I went to their home, and was told they had not returned. They seemed to have vanished from off the face of the earth. I was so disconcerted and worried that

I could not continue my writing, but I made a memorandum of the new ideas I had received. There stood Bab's boots in the hall, by the hat-rack, and when I looked at them I felt so angry that I wanted to throw them into the street. Mother was greatly perplexed to know what I could want of my Sunday boots on Saturday, but she knew when to let a boy alone.

After tea, Babbity Ban came home with the boots.

"Where did you go? And why were you gone so long?" said I.

"When we left the pup-pup-picture-gallery," said he, "we went to the f-f-fair grounds, to s-s-see the show."

"Did you find anything in the boots?" said I.

"N-n-not at first," said he. "But a-a-after a w-while I thought I f-f-felt something aw-awful unc-c-comfortable in the left boot, and I s-s-sat right down on the f-f-fair ground and pup-pup-pulled it off."

"And what did you find?" said I.

"A pup-pup-piece of somebody's old writing-book, all crumpled up," said he.

"Yes, and what did you do with it?" said I.

"I threw it into one of the pup-pup-pens where they keep the pup-pup-prize pigs," said he.

"Oh," said I.

"I hope there's nothing wrong about it," said he.

"Oh, no, there was nothing wrong about it," said I, determined not to let anyone know of the calamity.

"I'm g-g-greatly obliged for your b-b-boots," said he. "I hope you're g-g-going to write that pup-pup-prize story. I th-th-thought about it when I saw the pup-pup-prize pigs."

"You are welcome to the boots," said I.

I had always liked Bab, but on this occasion I felt rather glad to see him leave the house. That night I comforted myself by writing in my diary:

"I am not the only one that ever suffered for hiding important papers in his boots. There was Major André, for instance."

There was no way but to begin anew on the story, and I did begin at once, finishing half a dozen pages before sleep overtook me. Being determined that no further accident should befall the manuscript, I adopted the plan of putting it under my pillow at night, and going about with it snugly buttoned inside of my jacket in the day-time. There were many stoppages for lack of clear ideas, many accidental interruptions, and many pages so badly scratched and interlined that they had to be copied and re-copied. But at the end of ten days I had it finished and fairly written out in a readable hand.

Sammy finished his the same day, and we met at the boulder to read them to each other.

"Babbity Ban," I remarked, as I unrolled my manuscript, "said he thought of these stories when he saw the prize pigs at the fair."

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"Yes," said Sammy, "that's just like some people's thoughts. They link things together because the words sound alike, when the things are not at all alike."

"Not the least bit," said I.

"You ought to read first," said Sammy, "because you know you are four days older than I am."

"All right," said I, "here goes!" and I read:

THE TRIUMPH OF ROBERT MAGINNIS.

On a beautiful afternoon in September, 18—, two railway trains might have been seen rushing across the country in the level county of M—. They were on a single-track road, and one was going east and the other west, each moving toward the other at the rate of sixty miles an hour.

One train consisted of a hundred and four freight-cars loaded with fresh eggs, and fifteen coaches carrying a Presbyterian Sunday-school returning from a picnic.

The other train consisted of ninety-nine freight cars loaded with pig-iron, and twenty coaches that were filled with delegates to a woman's-rights convention.

The engineer of the egg train was stone blind, and his engine had neither bell nor whistle.

The engineer of the iron train was deaf-and-dumb, and his engine had neither flag nor head-light.

"I must make up my lost time," said the engineer of the egg train, looking at his watch, and he crowded on more steam.

"I think I hear the Chicago express coming down upon us," said the engineer of the iron train, and he doubled the speed.

The trains were now but half a mile apart, and this distance was rapidly lessening.

All on board were gay and happy. Some of the delegates were rehears-

ing their speeches, others were signing their names to a monster petition, and still others were adjusting their spectacles.

The trains thundered on, and were now but a quarter of a mile apart.

The lady teachers were talking in low tones to the classes taught by gentlemen, suggesting that they surprise their teachers with gifts of plush albums.

The trains were now hurtling through the air, their wheels hardly touching the track, and were but one furlong apart.

The gentleman teachers were talking with the classes taught by ladies, advising them to surprise their teachers with gold pencil-cases.

And still the trains sped on with the velocity of whirlwinds, and now they were but twenty rods apart.

As yet, all was serene. Not an egg was cracked, not a pig of iron was rudely jarred.

"I shall soon see the light in the window of my cottage home," said the engineer of the egg train.

"I shall soon hear the voice of my wife and the prattle of my children," said the engineer of the iron train.

As these tender thoughts came over them, they put on a little more steam.

The trains were now only two yards apart, hurrying on to destruction at the rate of a hundred miles an hour.

At this moment an india-rubber cow, hotly pursued by thirteen gingerbread-colored hounds, came careering across the plain. She saw but one possible escape from the dogs that were panting at her heels, eager to convert her into chewing-gum. With a desperate leap, she sprang at the rapidly narrowing gap between the two locomotives.

In another instant they would have crashed together; but the cow received the whole force of the shock. Her sides caved in for a moment, and then, expanding again by their own elasticity, parted the trains and set them running backward at a gentle pace, from which they soon came to a full stop. Not one egg was broken, not one pair of spectacles displaced.

The cow ran on, and soon arrived at a large field of fresh clover, with a pure stream of water passing through it, and the bars were down.

As for the gingerbread hounds, they were not able to stop or turn, and so they struck against the car-wheels and crumbled to pieces. Their remains were given to the Sunday-school children, those who had recited the most verses being awarded the largest chunks. Robert Maginnis, the hero of this romance, received the smallest of all, and everybody laughed.

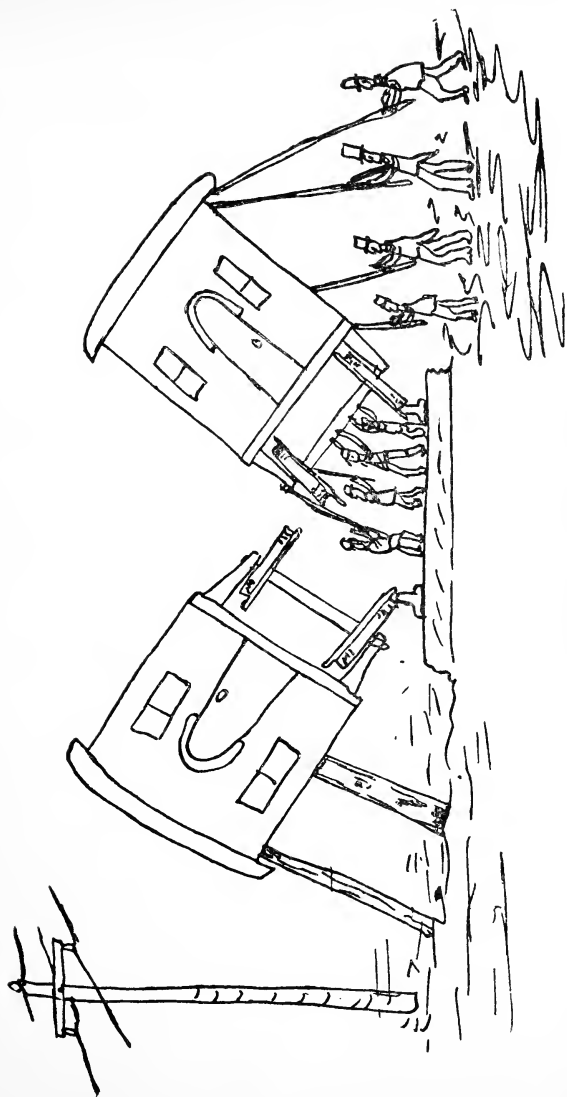
"The next thing," said the engineer of the egg train, "is to get one of those trains past the other. But I have never seen it done on a single track."

"I never heard of such a thing," said the engineer of the iron train, "and you may bet your eyes it can't be done."

Robert Maginnis now modestly stepped forward, called aside the two engineers and the two conductors, and spoke to them in low tones. At first they all shook their heads, but pretty soon one said he was in favor of letting the boy try it. Then they all said, "Yes, let the boy try it." So Robert Maginnis took command.

First he made everybody get out of the cars. Then he ordered the men and the larger boys to get poles, rails from the fences, posts, and everything of that sort that they could find along the road. Then they all took hold of the first car of the egg train and tipped it up to an angle of about forty-five degrees, with the wheels of one side resting on the right-hand rail and the wheels of the other side in the air. They brought it so near to a balance that it was easy to hold it there, and one or two rails put up as braces made it quite secure. The same was done with the second car of that train, and the third, and so on, till the egg train was all tipped up and resting on the right-hand rail alone.

"Now, gentlemen," said Robert, "we will tip up one car at a time of the iron train, so that it shall rest on the left-hand rail, and roll it along past the egg train. (See illustration.) But the locomotives must be attended to first, and they are heavy and hard to handle, and some parts of them are



MAGINNIS'S GREAT PROBLEM.

hot. I call for volunteer shawls and wraps, to wind around the steam-chests and other hot places."

Fifty women offered them. But one said if they took her shawl the baggage-man must give her a check for it.

"I think forty-nine will be enough," said Robert Maginnis.

"Let her keep her old shawl," said a boy in the infant class.

"Be civil to the ladies," said Robert Maginnis.

The shawls and wraps were tied on at the proper places, and then all took hold of one of the locomotives and yo-heave-hoed at it, but they could not tip it.

"Bring that rope from the tender," said Robert, and they brought a long and strong rope.

One end of this they tied around the dome of one of the engines, and then the rope was passed round a big tree near the track, and the other end fastened to the other engine.

"Now put on steam and go ahead a few feet with that engine," said he. "And you men stand by at this other engine with your rails and posts. Don't let her go clear over."

As the one engine moved slowly along the track, it pulled the other over gently, and when it got to the proper angle the men braced it. As the tender tipped, several barrels of water, overflowing from its tank, drenched half a dozen of the boys. But the wet boys did not seem to mind it much, and the dry boys gave three cheers, and everybody was entertained.

The last question was, how to tip the other engine. "She must be made to tip herself," said Robert Maginnis, and he walked up the track a few rods till he came to a big tree on the other side. "Run the engine up here till it is exactly opposite this tree," said he. "Now tie one end of the rope to the tree, and the other around the dome of the engine, drawing it straight and tight." This was done.

"Now put on a little steam, and make her go ahead slowly a few feet." This also was done, and it tipped the engine over till they caught her with the posts, and balanced her there like the other one.

As the engine and all the cars of one train were now tipped up on one rail, and the engine and all the cars of the other train tipped up on the other rail, they had only to take one at a time, support it carefully on both sides to keep it balanced, roll it along past the other train, and then let it down so that it would rest once more on both rails. When this was done, and all the cars of the other train had been set down again, the engineers sprang to their places, the conductors shouted "All aboard!" and the trains sped on their way.

And the president of the railroad company gave Robert Maginnis a life pass, engraved on a silver plate, to ride free on that road as much as he pleased forever and ever.

"That's a splendid practical story," said Sammy. "But I should be afraid the Sunday-school teachers might not like it."

"If they can't take a joke, they're not fit to be teachers," said I. "The best Sunday-school teacher I ever had, made lots of jokes, and took all that came along."

"And did the class give him a plush album?" said Sammy.

"It was a woman," said I, "and we gave her a gold toothpick, because the best joke she ever made was about a toothpick."

"Did she make jokes right in Sunday-school?" said Sammy.

"Yes, right in Sunday-school," said I. "But never mind about her; I want to hear your story."

"It's not such a practical story as yours," said he. "I don't believe a railroad president would give anybody a

silver pass for anything in it. But it's the best that I can do. So here it is."

THE UNBURSTABLE BUBBLE.

ONCE there was a pipe ; and one day there was a boy at one end of it, and a bubble at the other. Nobody knows what the bubble thought of the boy ; but the boy thought the bubble, when the sunlight struck it and painted the colors of the rainbow on its sides, was the most beautiful thing in the world. He was a lonely boy, and he blew a great many bubbles, and every time one burst he thought he felt lonelier than ever.

At last he began to wish he could blow a bubble that would not burst ; for he said, "Although I can blow new ones as fast as the old ones burst, they are not the same. Every one seems like a friend to me, and sometimes when one grows pretty big and hangs on longer than usual, or when it has very brilliant colors, I give it a name and adopt it for a brother or sister. How well I remember many of them ! There was Stillingworth, and Linsted, and Una, and Firebrand, and Barracola, and Ferronessa, and Oxtan, and Mortanzer, and Bulbul, and Balboa, and Vasco, and Lysander Charles, and Mary Iridia, and ever so many others. I can call them by name, but they will not come when I call them ; they have all gone to the great Nowhere. I will blow no more until I can blow one that will not burst."

So he laid away the pipe, and every day he used to try to think of some way to blow an unburstable bubble. After a while he made it one of his regular studies ; the first five minutes after breakfast, and the last five before supper, he gave to thinking of the possible ways to blow such a bubble.

He saw a mason putting hair in a batch of mortar, and asked him what it was for.

"To make it hold together better," said the mason. So the boy went home and pulled some hairs out of his head and tried to blow a bubble with the hairs as a sort of ribs to strengthen it, like the ribs of an umbrella. But he could not manage it.

Another day he saw a blacksmith tempering a tool, and asked him about

it; and the blacksmith not only explained the tempering of steel, but told him how glassware was tempered. Then the boy went home and opened the large oven doors on both sides of the kitchen stove when there was a hot fire, and, sitting down beside it with his pipe and bowl, blew bubbles and tried to send them slowly through the oven, to temper them and make them tough. But they all burst inside the oven. And when the cook took out a loaf of cake from that oven and looked at it, she said there must be something wrong about the draft, for the cake had risen toward China.

So the boy laid away his pipe once more.

One day, when he was walking through a forest, he met three boys, one of whom carried a shovel and another was leading a dog.

"Where are you going?" said he.

"To dig out a woodchuck," said they. "Don't you want to come with us? Hurrah!"

So he joined them.

They travelled through the forest until they found a woodchuck's hole, and the largest boy examined it and said he was sure the chuck was at home.

"It slants about so much," said he, "and we ought to dig about here," and he struck the shovel into the ground at a certain spot.

When he had dug a hole about a foot deep, he said he was tired, and the bubble boy took his turn next.

He had dug only a little while, when he felt something like very fine, sharp sand strike his face. It seemed to come up out of the ground. This happened again when he dug another shovelful, and a third time. But he could hardly see what struck him.

Then he took out his handkerchief and spread it horizontally, and told two of the boys to hold it that way above the hole while he put in the shovel. As soon as he stirred the earth at the bottom of the hole, the handkerchief began to bunch up in the middle, like a cat's back when a dog passes by.

"Hold it carefully, boys," said he, for he saw they were a little frightened, and he stirred the ground at the bottom more and more.

The handkerchief kept bulging and bulging, until it appeared to be full

of something lighter than air. Then he dropped the shovel, and told the boys to bring the corners carefully together on the under side. And he took a piece of string out of his pocket, gathered the edges of the handkerchief together to make a neck, like the neck of a balloon, and tied it tight. The other boys looked on with amazement and began to be superstitious.

"That means no good," said the largest boy. "There is some ghost or fairy around here. Perhaps it is the woodchuck's guardian spirit. At any rate, we had better let this chuck alone. I will fill up the hole again." So he filled it up, and put leaves over it, and made the ground look as if there had never been any digging there.

Then the smaller boys confessed that they were afraid to stay there any longer, and said they thought it must be time to go home, as it was growing late.

"I don't think it is very late," said the bubble boy. "See how straight the sunbeams come down through that opening in the tree-tops."

"That is nothing," said one of the other boys. "Just look at that woodpecker on the south side of that big tree."

"What of it?" said the bubble boy.

"My father told me," said the other boy, "that an Indian chief told him that the woodpecker never pecks on the south side of a tree till five o'clock in the afternoon."

So the boys wended their way out of the forest.

The bubble boy told the story to his uncle, who was a chemist, and the uncle said, "Bring it to me." But the boy did not like to let it all go. He took an old thimble, and made a small hole in the handkerchief, and managed to fill the thimble with the mysterious stuff, which he could hardly see, and stopped up the thimble with a ball of clay, and took it to his uncle.

The next day his uncle told him it was a new metal, lighter than air, never before discovered; and he said that as soon as he could get a day to spare he would go with the boy to the forest and get some more, and find out how large the mine was.

The boy thought perhaps he had the right thing at last for his unburstable

bubble. He took a teacupful of it, keeping the cup upside down all the time, and set it into a bowl of soap-suds. Then he put the end of his pipe into the suds, and blew and blew, and let out a little at a time of the mysterious metal, by tipping the cup, until he got it completely mixed in with the suds.

Then he took a pipeful, and blew a tremendous big bubble. And he could see sparkling points all over it, which kept coming out more and more, like stars in the evening sky, and were as brilliant as diamonds ; for the metal was crystallizing.

At last he threw it off from his pipe, and it sailed up against the open window, but was too big to go through. He stepped up to it, and pressed its sides with his hands. Instead of bursting like a common bubble, it bent in like a rubber ball, and when he had squeezed it enough it slid out through the window and sailed away.

He ran to the door and watched it, and it seemed to him he had never seen such beautiful colors as the sunlight made upon its sides. It went up and up, striking the top of a church steeple and bounding off. Then two birds lighted on it and sailed along with it, but still it kept going gracefully upward ; and he watched it until it seemed to sail directly into the sun and he could see it no more.

When he went back into the house, he found that his brother's puppy dog had tipped over the bowl of suds and torn the handkerchief all to pieces.

He and his uncle wandered through that forest from corner to corner, and from one side to the other, with magnets and rakes and divining-rods, and all sorts of discovery things, but they never found the mine again.

The next Saturday afternoon the boy took his pipe and bowl, and went alone into the forest. He buried them at the foot of a gigantic tree, while a mocking-bird was singing over his head, and on the bark of the tree he carved these lines :

**All bubbles burst, except the first
That sailed into the sun.
And now I lay my pipe away,
For bubble days are done.**

"That's a beautiful and fanciful story," said I. "Is it your own experience?"

"Not exactly my experience," said Sammy, "but it grew out of something that I have thought about."

"I have no doubt it will take the first prize," said I. "It sounds like a story; but mine sounds merely like a piece in a newspaper."

"Yours is truly practical," said Sammy, "and I should think it would be of great use to all railroad men."

"Only to those on single-track roads," said I, modestly. "Sammy," I continued, "do you remember what you had for breakfast the day we began these stories?"

"It was Saturday, wasn't it?" said he.

"Yes," said I.

"Then it must have been fish-balls," said he; "for we always have fish-balls on Saturday morning."

"What kind of fish?" said I.

"Codfish," said he.

When I went home I wrote in my diary, for the possible benefit of future scientists:

"Striped bass is very practical, but codfish braces up the fancy."

CHAPTER IX.

THE BOY THAT OWNED MORE THAN THE EARTH.

SAMMY and I had not been able to prevent our intimate friends from seeing that something unusual was going on, but we kept our secret as well as we could and waited impatiently for the announcement of the prizes.

"Don't you think," said I, one day when we sat together on the boulder, "that those boy editors are taking a pretty long time to make up their minds how to give the prizes?"

"Perhaps," said he, "a good many of the stories are so nearly equal that they have to read them over and over again, to find out which is best."

"Isn't it more likely," said I, "that hundreds and hundreds of stories have been sent in, and it takes a long time to get through them once?"

"It may be so," said he.

"You've no idea," said I, "what trash people send in whenever a prize is offered."

"How do you know?" said Sammy.

"My sister Lucy told me," said I. "I managed to set her talking about such things yesterday, without letting

her know that you and I had been writing for a prize, and she told me the whole story. She said the very trashiest thing that was offered always took the first prize."

"How did she find out?" said Sammy.

"Oh, she has studied the whole subject," said I; "she read me four or five prize essays and poems and things, out of her scrap-book."

"And were they so very bad?" said Sammy.

"They were simply disgraceful," said I. "And the worse they were, the bigger the prizes they took. There was a carrier's New-Year's address that took a prize of fifty dollars, and there was nothing at all in it but just one joke."

"What was that?" said Sammy.

"It said the Great Eastern was the Great Astern," said I—"just because she can't make as fast time as her builders expected her to. And I don't think that's any way to encourage either poetry or navigation."

"It was a pretty small joke for the price," said Sammy.

"But my sister says that's what takes with the multitude," said I.

"What multitude?" said he.

"Why, I suppose the multitude of prize committees," said I.

"Did she ever try for a prize?" said Sammy.

"Yes, once," said I, "for a prize poem."

"Did she take the prize?" said he.

"No, I believe not," said I—"at least I never saw or heard anything of it. And if that's the way these things are done, I think it looks rather dark for you and me."

"I don't know about that," answered Sammy. "I was just thinking that if the worst things took the prizes I should stand a pretty good chance. I am growing quite hopeful."

"But," said I, suddenly taking high moral ground, "would you want to take a prize for a bad thing?"

Before Sammy had time to make any answer to this deep question, Gouldburn Hinks came through the gate, accompanied by his new dog.

"Hello, Gouldburn!"

"Hello, boys!"

"What have you named your dog?"

"I've thought of two good names," said Gouldburn, "but can't make up my mind which to take."

"What are they?" said Sammy.

"Jammis and Towjer," said Gouldburn.

"Where did you find those names?" said I.

"They are two French words," he answered. "One means *forever* and the other means *never*. If I call him Towjer, of course it will mean that he is forever on hand; while if I call him Jammis, it means that he never fails to get what he is sent for."

"I should think you must find the study of the French language very interesting," said I.

"Yes," said Gouldburn, "it is fascinating; there are so many strange things about it, so different from ours. For instance, we say 'as dumb as an oyster,' but in France they call oysters *hooters*."

"No doubt those French oysters are a noisy lot," said I.

"Of course they must be," said he. "And you know we go to the barber-shop to have our heads shampooed, but the French talk about a *feet shampooer*."

"What do they mean by that?" said I.

"They mean a pic-nic," said he. "They are a queer people."

"Why not give the dog both names?" said Sammy, "or combine them in some way?"

"Towjis—Jammer," said Gouldburn, musingly. "I think I'll give him both names as they are—the firm name, I suppose father would call it. And, really, he is worth any two dogs I ever saw. Here, Jammis & Towjer, come here, nice old fellow!" and the dog, perceiving that he was spoken to, answered to the firm name by snuggling up to his master to be petted.

"What kind of dog is he?" said I.

"He's a retriever," said Gouldburn.

"Then your fortune must be made," said Sammy.

"Why do you think so?" said Gouldburn.

"Because I never heard of anything being retrieved except fortunes," said Sammy.

"This dog is to retrieve game when I shoot it and it falls where I can't get it," said Gouldburn. "But, speaking about fortunes, I am happy to tell you that my fortune is made."

There was no game worth speaking of, within many miles of where we lived; and, if there had been, Gouldburn had nothing to shoot it with. But it was just as well to have the dog as the beginning of an outfit.

"How did you make your fortune?" said I.

"My uncle Gouldburn," said he, "the one that I was named for, has given me eighty acres of good land in Michigan."

"Near Detroit?" said Sammy.

"Oh, no, nowhere near Detroit," said Gouldburn. "In fact, it is a good many miles from Detroit. Uncle says it is in the very heart of the grand old woods."

"Wild land, then," said I.

"Yes, delightfully wild," said Gouldburn.

"What is it good for?" said Sammy.

"Good for hunting, and trapping, and fishing," said Gouldburn—"fine furs and large game. Good for logging, and lumbering, and camping out. Good for farming, and manufacturing purposes, and sketching natural scenery. Good for landscape gardening, and laying out village lots. Good to build houses and churches on, and

may be to run two or three railroads across, with a big union depot in the centre. And there's no telling what rich mines of coal and iron and gold and silver may be under it."

"Anybody would think you owned the earth," said I.

"The earth!" said Gouldburn, "I own a great deal more than the earth."

Sammy and I both expressed astonishment, and asked him to explain.

"It is very simple," said Gouldburn. "I thought it all out last night, after I went to bed. And I can easily show you how it is."

Here he drew out a note-book that he always carried, and a pencil.

"Of course you know the earth is round," said he.

We intimated that we were aware of the fact.

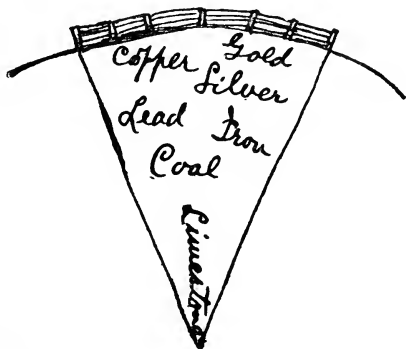
"We will let this curved line," he continued, "represent a part of its surface, and the fence on it is the fence around my land."



"There isn't any fence around it at present, but I'm going to build one as soon as I go there. I don't know how much you know about law, boys, but it's the law that a man who owns land on the surface owns down as

far as the centre of the earth. So my lines go down like this : ” and he added two converging lines.

“ Yes, I see,” said I, “ your farm is a wedge four thousand miles long.”

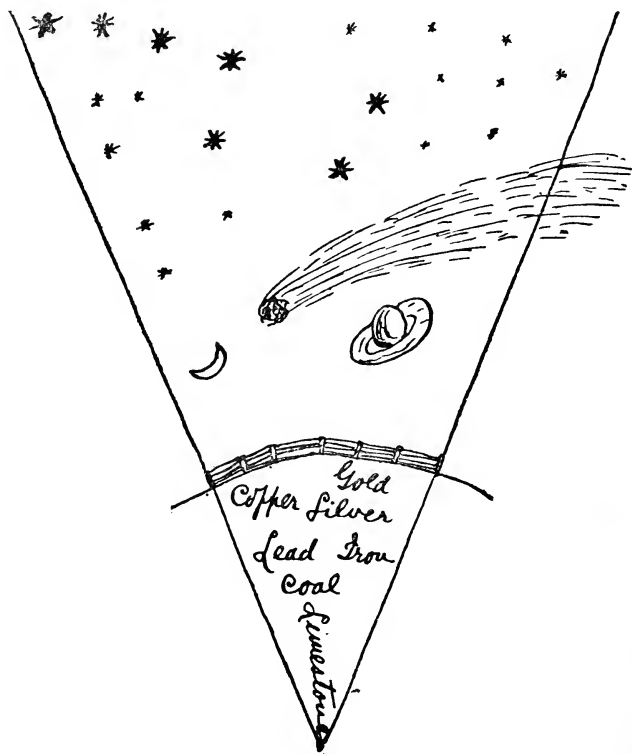


“ Exactly so,” said Gouldburn. “ And in four thousand miles there is room for a great many valuable minerals. We don’t exactly know what the mines are, for it is an unexplored region. But I’ll just write in the names of the most probable ones. If we should fail to find any of them, I can scratch out those.” So he wrote in the triangular space on his diagram *Gold, Copper, Silver, Lead, Iron, Coal.*

“ Won’t you need limestone for building?” said Sammy.

“ Oh, yes,” said Gouldburn, “ there ought to be limestone, of course,” and he crowded the word into the pointed end of the wedge. “ Now, you know,” Gouldburn

continued, "that the earth is not alone in the universe. You can learn that from the 'Book of Commerce.'"



This was meant to be a sarcasm directed at me, because I was fond of reading and quoting that useful work.

"We have no commerce with other worlds," I said.

Paying no attention to this remark, Gouldburn went

on: "We will represent some of the stars and other heavenly bodies shining down on that part of the world where my land lies," and he added them. The moon, the planet Saturn, a large comet, and the constellation of the Great Bear were very distinct, and there were many smaller stars.

"Now," said Gouldburn, "a man who owns land not only owns down to the centre of the earth, but owns up as high as he chooses to go. I choose to go as far up as this." Whereupon he continued the lines upward, till they enclosed all the heavenly bodies except a part of the comet's tail, which had to be accommodated in his neighbor's lot.

"There, boys," said he, "you can see if I don't own more than the earth."

"Yes, you are very rich," said I. "But why didn't you take in the sun while you were about it?"

"I don't want the sun," said he; "its climate is uncomfortable."

"How about the game?" said Sammy.

"Oh, there must be plenty of game," said Gouldburn; "for uncle says it is in the very heart of the grand old woods. In fact, I have been thinking it would be well not to clear it all up, but to leave about half of it wild for a game park. Have it full of bear and cougar and moose and elk and beaver and grouse and partridge and quail and ibex and buffalo; and then we could all go in and shoot whenever we wanted to."

Gouldburn's use of the singular forms of the words, instead of the plural, in enumerating the game, was very impressive. It not only sounded technical and knowing, but suggested great quantities, vast herds and flocks, instead of a few individual beasts and birds.

At this moment Babbity Ban came running into the yard, holding a paper in his hand, and shouted,

"W-w-we've g-g-got it, boys, we've got it!"

"Got what?" said I, with an assumed coolness, for I knew perfectly well what he meant.

"Got the pup pup-prize, the first prize!" said he, taking off his hat and whirling it round his head.

"I didn't know that anybody had offered a prize for stuttering," said Gouldburn Hinks.

"No, they ha-a-aven't, nor for sp-sp-spelling b-b-boat names, either," retorted Babbity.

"May I see the paper?" said Sammy, and Babbity handed it to him.

Sammy unfolded it, and spread it out on the boulder, while the rest of us looked over his shoulders. There was a large heading, "Our Prize Story," in the first column, and under it the announcement that the first prize, five dollars in cash, had been awarded to "The Unburstable Bubble," by Samuel T. Whitney. And there on the next page was the story itself, all in good plain print, with Sammy's name at the head of it.

"That's bully!" said I, with only a medium-sized

lump in my throat; and I considered that in expressing this sentiment I was quite generous, for "bully" was a very strong word, and my parents had told me not to use it.

Gouldburn Hinks picked up the paper, turned it over to look at the title and place of publication, then turned it back again, and carefully reread the announcement of the prize, then laid it down on the stone and said:

"That comes just in the nick of time."

"For what?" said I.

"For our Michigan scheme," said he. "I know where we can buy a good rifle for five dollars."

"What do you want of a r-r-rifle?" said Babbity, "and how are you g-g-going to b-b-buy it with S-S-Sammy's money?"

"Oh," said Gouldburn, "I'm not going to buy it, of course. If I put in the land and the game, that's enough for my share. I thought Sammy might like to buy the rifle."

"I don't think I care for a rifle," said Sammy.

"A shot-gun," said Gouldburn, "will do for the quail and the grouse, but we need a rifle for the large game. If we have only a shot-gun, the bear and the moose will get away from us. The fact is, boys, I had a plan, which I was just going to lay before you when we were interrupted, to take you into partnership on my Michigan land, and make ourselves a company of hardy pioneers.

I was just telling them before you came," he continued, turning to Babbity, "that my uncle has given me eighty acres of land in Michigan, in the very heart of the grand old woods; and I propose to make half of it into a game park, and have a jolly company of boys to camp out on the other half, and be trappers and hunters till we get tired of it, and then clear it up and be farmers till we are tired of that, and then cut it up into city lots, and sell them off for stores and houses and factories and hotels and railroad depots, and all that sort of thing. And then sit on the piazza of the biggest hotel the rest of our lives and march in a procession once a year as members of an old pioneer society. Uncle says there is nothing like going west and growing up with the country."

"That's all ve-ve-very nice," said Babbity, "but I don't expect to l-l-live as long as M-m-methuselah."

"Things don't move at Methuselah's pace nowadays," said Gouldburn. "If he had come over as a cabin-boy with Columbus, he'd be only a young man to-day."

"Where is that rifle you spoke about?" said I.

"It's in an auction-room on Main Street," said Gouldburn, "and though it's second-hand, it's really as good as new. The man let me snap a cap on it. But, of course, if Sammy would rather buy a shot-gun first, perhaps we can find one at a bargain, if we look around."

"I don't care for a shot-gun either," said Sammy; "I don't want to kill anything."

“All right,” said Gouldburn, “then you can be a trapper, and take the fur animals alive, and the rest of us will do the hunting.”

“If we get the s-s-second prize, too,” said Babbity, “we shall have something to buy p-p-powder with, to fire the r-r-rifle or sh-sh-shot-gun, or whatever ’tis. Did you s-s-see this?” and he pointed to an obscure paragraph not before observed by any of us, which said that the award of the second prize would be announced in the next issue.

“I hope we shall get it,” said Sammy.

“If we do,” said I, “hurrah for Michigan!”

“Come, Jammis & Towjer, we must be going,” said Gouldburn. “I’ll see you again to-morrow, boys,” and he walked off whistling, followed by the dog with the firm name.

When at the tea-table I told about that dog’s name, the family burst into a roar of laughter, and mother asked who was Gouldburn’s French teacher.

I told her I thought he had a self-instructing book; and she said it was very probable.

CHAPTER X.

A YOUNG ORATOR.

I WAS not obliged to wait for the next number of the paper, to learn whether my story had taken the second prize. In the course of a week the manuscript came back to me, accompanied by a letter of explanation. The editors professed to be very much interested in "Robert Maginnis and his triumphs;" but they said they could not use the story, because it required illustration. They could set anything in type, but they could not engrave pictures. Therefore it was reluctantly returned. They added, for my consolation, that among twenty-eight stories sent in for competition, there was not one that compared favorably with the one that had taken the first prize, or with mine. Hence they had determined not to award the second prize at all at present. They signed their letter "The Twin Twins."

Sammy's success had made so much talk that the whole matter was divulged, and I was obliged to read my manuscript to the family, whose apparent enjoyment of it was a balm to my wounded ambition. If a prophet has no honor in his own country, there is consolation in

knowing that a writer may win praise at his own fireside. My sister's sarcasm about the general stupidity of prize committees, and the lack of manual skill in the Twin Twins, if not one of their four jack-knives could cut a simple outline engraving, was less comforting than my mother's recital of the anecdotes of famous authors whose works have gone begging for a publisher.

Sammy Whitney expressed a great deal of interest when I read him the letter of rejection, and borrowed the manuscript of my story, saying he wanted to read it again.

I was consumed with curiosity to know what he would do with his prize money. I knew that he never had much, except what he earned himself, but his parents permitted him to do what he pleased with whatever he did have. He was too generous to hoard it, he was not likely to speculate with it, and I had heard him refuse to buy firearms, which to boys and Indians are generally the objects most desired. But perhaps there was not much of the red man in Sammy's composition. In the wide range of my imaginings, I even wondered whether he would purchase jewelry or other trinkets to present to anybody, and I think it was the occurrence to my mind of this remote possibility that kept me from asking him point-blank what he would buy, which the intimacy of our friendship would have permitted me to do. As the days went on, I wondered why he did not mention the matter himself, since he talked so freely about all his other affairs; and

one day I found myself studying the display in a jeweller's window, and wondering which article Sammy would be most likely to choose.

Meanwhile we received a mysterious invitation from Gouldburn Hinks to meet him and some other boys in his father's barn on the ensuing Saturday. We were asked to keep the matter a secret from everybody, and were told that the signal was, to whistle the first line of "Hail Columbia" and give a double knock on the door, and the pass-word was "*lignumvitæ*," which, as it signified the hardest kind of wood, was supposed to be so hard a word that no boy would ever guess it—"unless he was remarkably familiar with the 'Book of Commerce,'" Gouldburn added.

When I went to the barn at the appointed hour, whistled, knocked, and was admitted by a boy who opened the door barely wide enough for me to squeeze through, I found there, besides Gouldburn, Fred Crawford, Charley Dilloner, Babbity Ban, and a dozen other boys. Pete Ruyter came soon after my entrance; but as he could not whistle the first line of "Hail Columbia," and had forgotten the pass-word, though he gave the double knock, the vigilant door-keeper made trouble about admitting him till Gouldburn interfered and told him to walk right in. Last of all came Sammy Whitney. His left hand was tied up in a way that seemed to indicate a serious hurt. To our eager inquiries he answered that he had cut it

with a chisel ; but to questions of how, when, and where, he gave only vague and unsatisfactory replies.

When all the boys that were expected had arrived, Gouldburn took his stand on a feed-box that raised him considerably above the floor, tapped with his heel for silence and attention, and explained the object of the meeting.

A great dusty sunbeam came through an arched hole in the pediment where a small dove-cote had once been fastened, passed slantwise athwart the hay-mow, just escaped the edge-beam, and struck him on the shoulder, sending half its prism across his chest and illuminating his whole face. He held his cap in his hand while he spoke, and the mass of his yellow curly hair was like an aureole. The dog Jammis & Towjer jumped upon the box after him, but at a word from his master sat down at his feet and contemplated the audience with a placid gaze. Three of the boys sat at the edge of a manger with their feet dangling, two had made themselves seats by turning buckets upside down, one was perched on a ladder that led to the mow, and the others stood about on the floor. A single horse thrust out his head from the farthest stall, looked at us, and seemed to wonder what we were about.

Gouldburn was one of the best declaimers in our school, and had committed to memory many extracts from congressional and other speeches. His address,

which was somewhat oratorical, was, as nearly as I can remember, as follows :

“ Friends and Fellow-Citizens — Fellows you are already, and citizens you will be when you are twenty-one years old. I have called you together to consider the greatness of your country and its high place in the progress of civilization. You all know that the grand procession moves westward, and westward we must go if we would keep up with it. I have recently come into possession of a domain in Michigan, in the very heart of the grand old woods, and I want you to share it with me. [Applause.]

“ Imagine yourselves standing in two lines in the depths of the forest, with the vegetable giants towering above you on every side, and little rills of sunshine leaking down through their leafy covering. The men in one line have axes in their hands, while those in the other carry rifles. The axemen strike the glittering steel into the wood, the forest resounds, and every twig trembles. The alert riflemen peer through the jungle in every direction, with pieces ready for instant action should they discover the glaring eyes of a cougar or the form of a lurking savage ; and the occasional report of a rifle tells that one of these has bit the dust—or, rather, the dead leaves that take the place of dust in a forest.

“ The resounding strokes of the axes follow incessant-



ELOQUENCE IN A BARN.

ly, till one after another the monarchs are laid low, and the vast space of forty acres is open to the sunlight and free air of heaven.

“Then we roll the logs together and build houses and barns, and we have cattle and horses, and ploughs and harrows, and hired men to use them, and soon we see green meadows and waving corn-fields all around us.

“But there is another forty acres, into which the plough does not enter and where the axe is never heard. It remains in all its original beauty and solemnity as a part of the grand old forest. And when we feel so minded, we take our rifles and our shot-guns and our hunting-knives, and whistle to our Jammis & Towjer [hearing his name, the dog instantly rose, snuffed at Gouldburn’s hand, and looked up into his face, as if expecting orders to retrieve something or “sick” somebody]—lie down, Jammis & Towjer!—we whistle to our trusty retrievers, and saunter out through the leafy arcades. At every report of our pieces, the friends who remain on the farm that day exclaim, ‘There goes a moose, or a deer, or an ibex, or perhaps a lurking savage, or three or four out of a covey of partridges!’ And as the day wanes we stagger home under the weight of our game. And sometimes no doubt we shall have to sit out all night, under the silent stars, guarding the corn-field and the poultry-house.

“And there is probably a beautiful river, which I

haven't yet learned the name of, or found on the map, running through one corner of the domain, where we can fish when we have become tired of game suppers, and where we can swim and skate and have as many canoes as we care to paddle.

“After some years, when we have grown older in the realities of life, and the red man is conquered and the game exhausted, we shall see the woods gradually melting away, and a village springing up on the spot, with its neat houses, and its blacksmith-shop, and its store and post-office, and its heaven-pointing spire. And then a railroad will come pushing through the forest, like a great iron serpent with wagons on its back; and the village will become a city, and the city will have a court-house, and a jail, and a public square, and a military company, and fire-engine companies, and newspapers, and a brass band, and I shall be the mayor and you the aldermen.

“And after many more years we shall all be old and white-haired, and walk about with gold-headed canes, and say how things have changed since we were young. Then we will organize a pioneer society, and once a year march through the streets with the brass band, and carry a banner with a black bear and a log-house and a rail-fence painted on it, and have a grand dinner at the best hotel, and tell over and over all the stories of our encounters with the ferocious beast and the lurking savage; and the newspapers will call us the hardy forerunners of civiliza-

tion in this western world. O, my friends and fellow citizens, let us turn our eager faces toward the glorious west !” [Applause.]

At this point in Gouldburn’s speech the oratorical display came to an end, and there was a sudden change in his tone ; for now he had to lay before us a definite plan for the morrow, instead of imaginative pictures of the distant future.

“ You know, boys,” he said, “ we can’t do all this just yet, for we are not quite old enough ; but I think we might enjoy rehearsing for it, and so I want to get up a grand rehearsal of the whole scheme, next Saturday, at Emerald Point. [Loud applause.]

“ I thought we would give out the parts to-day,” he continued, “ and begin to get things ready. I think Fred Crawford should be First Huntsman, and he should choose three assistant huntsmen, if that pleases you. [Everybody said ‘ yes.’] There is Sammy Whitney with his hand tied up as if he had been wounded by a mysterious arrow, shot by some lurking savage. He might be the chief of a government surveying-party, and we will let him choose his own assistants. We ought to have four good axe-men, or foresters, and we will give those places to the boys that can bring the brightest axes or hatchets. And there ought to be at least half a dozen lurking savages. These must be seen all the time around the outskirts of the settlement, with bows in their hands

and war-paint on their faces. It would be best to have them of two different tribes, so that they can be supposed to fight with each other a part of the time, which saves the settlers. I will appoint Charley Dilloner and Babington Bantel chiefs of the two tribes. They ought to be painted in different ways. If the two noble chiefs will step forward, I will show you my idea about it."

Charley and Bab mounted the feed-box and stood beside Gouldburn, who took a pin from the lappel of his jacket and pricked his own thumb. With the blood he painted on each of Charley's cheeks a large double cross, and on his forehead a rude star. On each of Bab's cheeks he painted two concentric circles, and on his forehead a cross like an X.

The boys were greatly amused at the picturesque appearance of the two chiefs; but when the dog saw the war-paint on their faces he became excited, barked furiously, and would have attacked them had he not been promptly restrained by his master. When he comprehended that Gouldburn approved of the innovation he lay down again, but kept his eye on the boys, and appeared to be studying out the philosophy of the performance.

"Of course we shall m-m-make a great deal of fun, but how are we g-g-going to have any ourselves, l-l-lurking on the ou-ou-outskirts all the while?"

"Just as much fun there as anywhere; you can see the whole show," said Gouldburn.

"I s-s-suppose you white men will have s-s-something to eat and drink in your camp," said Babbity, "and st-st-stop for dinner at the pup-pup-proper time."

"Of course," said Gouldburn.

"Well, then," said Babbity, "how are we l-l-lurking savages going to get any, unless we r-r-rush in and t-t-tomahawk you all?"

"Oh, we can arrange that," said Gouldburn. "At dinner-time we will invite you to bury the hatchet and come in and make a treaty."

"All r-r-right!" said Babbity, "we'll b-b-bury."

"But the treaty must fall through, and after dinner you'll have to go out and lurk some more."

"All r-r-right! we'll l-l-lurk."

"Some of the boys will have to represent game and wild animals," said Gouldburn. "We want a large, strong boy, who knows how to act, for a moose. I will appoint Pete Ruyter to be moose."

"All right!" said Pete. "What growls the moose when he says?"

"A moose doesn't really say anything when he growls," said Gouldburn. "In fact, he doesn't exactly growl at all. He browses around, and shakes the snow from his big horns, and tries to run away from the hunter."

"I got no horns, and summer don't snow," said Pete.

"I've provided for that," said Gouldburn, and he lifted the cover of the feed-box and took out an old black beaver

hat, in the crown of which he had cut two holes and inserted large white paper horns.

When he placed the hat on Pete's head, the boys set up a shout at the grotesque effect, and this roused Jammis & Towjer. The dog for a moment looked in amazement, then made a spring, knocking Pete over, seized the hat in his mouth, and ran away to a dark stall, where he sat down with it and growled at our approach. By the time he was conquered, the moose head was so completely ruined that Gouldburn said he would have to make another, and called for contributions of old hats.

"If he r-r-retrieves a pup-pup-partridge as he r-r-retrieved that hat," said Babbity, "we'll not have many g-g-game suppers."

"I suppose he didn't exactly understand a moose," said Gouldburn; "he's only intended for birds."

Emerald Point was a green, level spot, enclosed on two sides by a bend of the river, and on the third by a high, sloping bank that was largely covered with trees and bushes. A brook that babbled down the bank through a shallow gorge, under a leafy covert, came out into the sunlight at the bottom, and with a long curving stroke cut its way across the greensward to the river.

Two great plane-trees grew beside the larger stream, which had partly undermined their roots, and threw their shadows upon the grass in the morning, and across the water in the afternoon. Beside the brook there was a

graceful elm, and a little farther off a large butternut-tree. We had often played there, in a desultory way. We had sat on the exposed roots of the plane-tree, with our toes perhaps touching the surface of the water, and fished or told stories. We had built dams in the brook, we had climbed the butternut-tree, and we had had target practice against the bank with pistols and bows. But we had never attempted anything like a regular drama.

Gouldburn, in laying out his programme for what he called the "Grand rehearsal of the progress of civilization," told us he considered that it would cover a period of about forty years, and, as we should have about four hours to enact it in, each hour would represent ten years.

"Th-th-then we shall have a b-b-b-birthday every six minutes," said Babbity.

"Exactly so," said Gouldburn.

"And in about an hour we shall n-n-need whiskers."

"I suppose that's so," said Gouldburn, "though I hadn't thought of it before. Well, every man in the company can either provide himself with a whisker wig, or play that he patronizes the barber shop, as he prefers. But I'll tell you what it is, boys, we don't want too many of these objections. I studied out a whole sentence in my French lesson yesterday, and it said nothing was ever so good that premature criticism couldn't discourage it."

"All right!" said Babbity, "I won't pup-pup-premature it any more."

CHAPTER XI.

THE PROGRESS OF CIVILIZATION.

NOT one of the boys owned a watch, and when we went to prepare the place the question arose as to the marking of time. Sammy Whitney solved it by driving into the ground a slender stake about four feet high. When the one-o'clock whistle at the steam-mill blew, he drove in a peg at the point where the end of the shadow of the stake rested on the grass. When he saw the 2.07 express cross the railroad bridge, he drove in another peg, a little off from the spot where the shadow now rested, making allowance for the seven minutes. This gave him the distance it would travel in one hour, and by driving in three more pegs at equal distances he produced a sun-dial that answered all the purposes of our grand rehearsal.

It was arranged that the portion of Emerald Point which was south of the brook should be considered the forty acres to be cleared and made into farming-land, while that on the north side was to be the game park.

It took all our spare time during the week to get ready the apparatus that was required for the drama.

Saturday morning dawned bright and clear, and in the forenoon we carried the things to the ground and arranged them. Early in the afternoon the show began.

Gouldburn Hinks stood with a horn in his hand, watching the shadow of the sun-dial, and the moment that it fell upon the first peg he blew a blast, the signal for all to take their appointed places. Jammis & Towjer appeared to think that the bugle-blast was a command to him to do something, and sprang to his feet. Had he seen but one boy running, he would probably have given chase; but when he saw a score of them all hurrying off in different directions, he was bewildered, and in despair looked up into his master's face and howled. Gouldburn quieted him with a pat and a word, and then walked to the small tent that we had pitched near the brook.

In a few minutes he emerged, wearing a broad-brimmed felt hat, set at an angle and looking much like his own picture of the planet Saturn. Across his shoulder was an old shot-gun, which had lost its lock, and slantwise from the other shoulder hung a loose belt or sash, with several pouches evidently filled with either powder and bullets or sand and pebbles. His legs were encased in a pair of buckskin leggins made of heavy brown wrapping-paper, the seams being tied all the way up with little bowknotted pieces of colored ribbon.

He blew another blast on his tasselled bugle, and Fred Crawford and the other huntsmen rallied to his side.

They all wore buckskin leggins like his, though hardly so well decorated with ribbons, and carried wooden guns.

The axemen and surveyors came together in another group, a few yards distant.

“My trusty men,” said Goulburn, turning and addressing us, “we are the vanguard of civilization. Behold it as it comes marching on!” and he waved his hand toward the axemen and surveyors. “But yonder in the forest,” and he waved his other hand toward the tall grass on the north side of the brook, where at several points we could see the gleam of something that was either steel or tin, “lurks the treacherous savage. We must cross the frontier and attack him, to protect our civilization. Forward, march!”

We advanced to the edge of the little bluff, and scrambled down into the gorge. While we were crossing the brook on stepping-stones, suddenly there came down upon us such a shower of turf as nearly buried us, soiled the pure water to a turbid mass, knocked off Saturn’s ring, and ruined half the leggins of the company. At the same time a large tin boiler was beaten furiously, and through the din I heard a terrific war-cry, which I shall never forget. It was :

“Wh-wh-whoop la! Y-y-yip yap! Sk-sk-skilpy skalpy! Me b-b-b-big Injun!”

This was answered by a prolonged howl from Jammis & Towjer, who stood on the edge of the bank.



THE BATTLE OF EMERALD POINT.

As we rose to the edge of the opposite bank, we were assailed with another volley of turf. A very heavy one, from the hand of a brave whose face was completely covered with red war-paint, with a skull and crossbones rudely represented on the forehead, struck me in the breast and sent me rolling down the bank into the water. Before I could recover myself, Jammis & Towjer had me by the collar and was trying to drag me out. The column halted a little, till I could catch up with them, and then we made a grand charge upon the savages, who retreated before us, but never forgot to keep up the whoop and beat the boiler.

When, in their retreat, they came to a little round hillock, they made there their last grand stand, ranging themselves in a circle upon it, facing outward, with the boiler-beater in the centre.

Boldly toward this marched the line of huntsmen, and closed around half of it in a semicircle. Then each drew from his pocket a ball that was made of white flour or pulverized chalk enclosed in tissue paper; and at a word of command all these bombs were thrown at the band of desperate savages. I remember how lurid the face of Chief Babbity looked one instant, and how pale the next, as if he had been suddenly whitewashed by a philanthropic committee. My own bomb or hand-grenade had been almost ruined when I rolled into the water, being moistened into a thick, heavy paste. But I managed to

get it out of my pocket, wound a wisp of long grass around it to hold it in shape, and let it fly with the rest on its errand of civilization. It struck the boiler-beater in the top of the head and fastened itself there, and a moment later I observed that the wisp of grass, held at one end, had uncoiled itself and floated out on the air, like a graceful plume or a defiant scalp-lock, over the head of the musical medicine man.

As the white smoke of the hand-grenades drifted away, Gouldburn brought the disabled shot-gun to his shoulder, and pointed it at the still defiant tribe. Chief Huntsman Crawford drew a match from his pocket, scratched it on the only dry spot he could find on his leggings, and applied it to the piece. There was a loud report and a great smoke. Gouldburn was not knocked over by the recoil, for I caught him. With the exception of the medicine man, all the savages fell carefully to the ground, as if resolved to lurk no more. The medicine man ran away at high speed, with his grass plume streaming on the wind, dragging his boiler after him, and yelling in an unknown tongue, until he disappeared over the edge of the river bank.

At a motion from Gouldburn, the victorious hunters gathered around him in a circle ; then, taking off the ring of Saturn, he proclaimed :

“Three cheers for the triumph of civilization !” and the cheers were given with a will.

“Tiger !” added Chief Huntsman Crawford.

“No, no!” said Gouldburn, quickly raising his hand with a forbidding gesture, “no tiger this time; tigers are not civilized.”

We recrossed the little stream, climbed out of the cañon, and rejoined the civilians at the tent, who received us with victorious cheers, and placed a wreath of oak leaves around Saturn, just above his ring.

A few minutes later, one of the Indian chiefs appeared on the northern bank, waving a handkerchief on the end of a stick. As it was a clean white handkerchief, he seemed to be a remarkably neat Indian.

“See, my fellow-citizens,” said Gouldburn Hinks, “the remnant of the tribe sue for peace.”

We all went to the bank, and held a parley across the little cañon. The Indians came up, one after another, and stood by the one who held the flag of truce. If the remnant of the tribe was composed of the identical individuals who had fallen in the battle, that need concern nobody but themselves.

I cannot report the dialogue, for it was carried on mainly in what one of the small boys called “Chalk talk.” I distinguished the expressions “heap good Injun,” “great father,” “smoky pipe,” and “bury hatchet,” which I suppose was all the English that the savages could speak. At the close it was announced that a treaty of peace had been agreed upon, and then all the noble red men crossed over to our side.

Fred Crawford brought out a spade from the tent, with which one of the Indians dug a hole; another threw in a hatchet, which was buried out of sight, and then we shook hands all round; after which we went into the tent and had something to eat and drink.

One little fellow, whom Sammy Whitney poetically denominated "Time's Faithful Sentry," was given an extra sandwich and sent out to watch the shadow on the dial, in order that our feasting might not be prolonged beyond the hour.

When he came in and reported that the shadow had reached the second peg, Gouldburn Hinks, who was sitting on an empty nail-keg, enjoying a glass of lemonade, rose solemnly and proclaimed:

"Behold, the red man passes away before the advance of civilization, like dry leaves of the forest in the autumn wind! The age of the fighter is closed, and the age of the hunter begins."

Then all the Indians, except three, slipped out of the tent, went quietly down to the brook and washed the paint from their faces, and reappeared among us as white men. Those three Gouldburn told us were "the mournful remnant of a once powerful race, and must still lurk along the borders of civilization." Accordingly, they lurked.

A few minutes were allowed for the representatives of large game to get into their characters and escape to the forest, and then a grand hunting-party was organized.

Gouldburn put on what had once been a white linen jacket, but was now thoroughly stained with grass.

“Green,” said he, “is the true hunter’s color.”

The horn was given to Charlie Dilloner, who appeared anxious to show that he knew when to sound it, by sounding it most of the time.

We crossed the brook again, and advanced cautiously through the tall grass, with a frequent “Hist ! hist !” from Chief Huntsman Crawford, lest we should scare the game. I had the honor of carrying the gun.

After a time we caught sight of a covey of partridges feeding in the grass. Fred laid his hand on my arm, and with his other arm made a motion for the rest of the party to come to a halt. At the same time, Gouldburn restrained the eagerness of Jammis & Towjer by seizing his collar.

I raised the gun to my shoulder, and pointed it at the partridges. I saw Fred take a match from his pocket and scratch it on his leggin ; then I shut my eyes, and knew nothing more till the gun went off with a terrific bang, and I found myself sprawling on the ground. I heard Gouldburn say, excitedly :

“Sick him !—I mean retrieve him !—Jammis & Towjer,” and just as I fully recovered myself the joyful dog came running back with the bird in his mouth, which he delivered to Gouldburn. It was made of a brown shingle, the outline of the partridge having been drawn

with a pencil, and the superfluous wood cut away with a pocket-knife. As the remainder of the flock did not know enough to fly away when one of their number was shot, a boy was sent out to remove them.

"That does very well to begin with," said Gouldburn, "the partridge is excellent eating; but now we must look for some larger game. Ha! I see an ibex on yonder crag, bounding from rock to rock."

There was no crag in sight except a very small heap of sand, and no rocks, but there was a very good ibex on it, made of the brown paper that was left when the leggins were finished.

"R-r-rather too much i-i-ibex for the amount of c-c-c-crag, I should say," remarked Babbity.

"Bab," said Fred, "that is pup-pup-premature," and the critic said no more.

It was now Fred's turn to hold the gun, and I took the match and fired it for him. I expected to see him repeat my performance; but he had loaded the piece himself, being less lavish with the powder than before, and the only game brought down was the ibex, which theoretically tumbled over a rocky precipice five hundred feet. Jammis & Towjer was ordered to retrieve it from the hypothetical abyss, which he did in fine style.

While we stood around the dead ibex, admiring it and discussing it, we were startled by a loud "Hoot!" followed by "Whoop la! Skeelpy skolpy! Me heap big moose!"

Looking toward the river, we saw a moose, with black head and white horns, moving along slowly in the edge of the grass. If that moose had made a mistake in getting his cue from an Indian brave, everybody was too polite to notice it.

Before we could get the gun loaded, Jammis & Tower, recognizing the mate of the animal he had retrieved in the barn, made for it at full speed, without orders, and seized it as before.

Pete Ruyter, forgetting he was a moose, exclaimed :

“Dem dog too much retreef what dasen’t be retrooven !” and rising to his feet gave chase.

Down the bank they went, pell mell ! and along the gravelly shore, till the dog, fearing to be overtaken, plunged into the water and swam several yards.

Pete was about to plunge in after him, when Gouldburn (for we had all followed in haste) laid his hand on his shoulder and said :

“Never mind ! we’ll consider you a dead moose all the same, and now we must carry you home.”

Hereupon he was lifted to the shoulders of six of us and borne in triumph out of the woods, the horn and the boiler making sufficient music by the way. Then there was more feasting in the tent, the dead moose eating as heartily as any live boy, till the Faithful Sentry of Time came to the door and announced that the shadow had reached another peg on the dial.

"Friends and fellow-citizens," said the master of ceremonies, "the age of the wild huntsman, in this beautiful land of ours, has passed away forever. We will hang his bugle on the wall, to be taken down no more. The day of the engineer and the builder has come. Let us see what they will bring forth."

Sammy Whitney, with a corps of seven assistants, marched out, descended to the bed of the brook, and set at work collecting the stones that were scattered along its bed. With these, at the point where the little gorge was narrowest, they built a bridge, piling up the stones on either side, and making each successive course project a little beyond the one beneath it, till the top courses met over the middle of the stream.

At the same time, other boys were busy putting up houses. That is to say, they drove two tall stakes into the ground, and stretched between them a large sheet of paper that was painted to represent the side of a house. Some of the buildings bore signs. I remember one read:

"Real estate office. Choice lots, \$100 a square foot."

And on the corner of the building that bore the sign "*Post-office*" there was a "Notice" which set forth that a town meeting would be held, to determine whether the town should issue bonds to build a railroad to the Arctic Ocean. "This," it said, "will give us cheap ice forever. Down with the ice monopoly!"

The name of every boy in the company appeared on

some sign, as the proprietor of a business. Sammy Whitney and I were represented as the publishers and editors of a story paper, and underneath was the legend :

"All goods of our own make, and warranted."

A smaller sign on the same building bore the words :

"B. Bantel, professor of vocal culture."

On another building was the sign :

"F. Crawford, broker. Everything broken to order."

On another was :

"Ruyter Brothers. Divers' sundries."

One large building bore the sign :

*"Grand Union Depot. Trains for everywhere in no time.
Round trips on square terms."*

By the time the bridge was finished, the city had come into existence. Then a procession was formed, which marched through the streets of the city and across the new bridge, which was declared open for traffic. And after this there was what Gouldburn called "a civic banquet" in the Town Hall, that hall being the tent. The only untoward event of the procession was, that Jammis & Towjer, wishing to get into the line at a certain point, in order to do it jumped right through the wall of the Grand Union Depot, making it look as if a locomotive had exploded inside.

When the banquet was ended by the announcement of Time's Faithful Sentry that the shadow had reached another peg, Gouldburn rose for one more speech.

“My fellow-citizens,” said he, “the most important hour in the life of our young civilization has arrived. Election day is at hand, and we are about to choose our first mayor and aldermen. By the suffrages of a free people we are to spread out the ægis of liberty, like a new silk umbrella, over this beautiful metropolis. I have the honor to be your candidate for the high office of mayor, and when I am elected, as no doubt I shall be, I hope to do all that man may do to purify the public service, abolish all taxes, improve the rivers and harbors with embankments of polished marble, reduce postage to nothing, and pay the people for writing letters, have the streets sprinkled with Cologne water twice a day, double the wages of our laboring-men, reduce the price of everything, crush the enemies of the commonwealth, advance its interests, and mete out even-handed justice to all.” (Great applause.)

When Gouldburn had finished his speech, Fred Crawford got upon a box and shouted :

“I nominate Peter Ruyter as the opposition candidate. He is sure to be elected, for he will have the solid Dutch vote, and he has promised not to say anything on any subject until after election. Hurrah for Ruyter!” (Three hearty cheers.)

“Fellow-citizens,” said candidate Hinks, in a calm philosophic tone, “as they say in Paris, ‘chacken aye son gowt,’ which means, let every fellow suit his own taste.”

Thereupon the entire company broke up into two about equal factions, formed two processions, and marched through the streets of the town with plentiful shouting and unlimited enthusiasm. Jammis & Towjer was the only citizen that appeared to have no firm political convictions, the only independent voter. He was puzzled to tell whether any one group was the head of one procession or the tail of the other, the discordant shouting perplexed him still more, and he really did not know which candidate he preferred.

We intended to wind up this last act in the "grand rehearsal of the progress of civilization," with a torchlight procession and a few fireworks in the edge of the evening. But while we were lighting the transparencies a careless boy managed to set off the fireworks prematurely. A light breeze had sprung up, the flames leaped from building to building, and in a minute or two the whole city was in a blaze. A spark found its way to a quantity of powder in a paper, which had been placed for safety in a crevice between the stones of the bridge, and that structure went up into the air with a heavy report.

To me, the disaster was not altogether humorous: for we had spent much of our play-time on Emerald Point, had enjoyed many games there, and it was becoming one of the romantic spots in my little world. Moreover, I realized that our play-days were nearly at an end. Though, of course, I did not fully understand—and it was well I

did not—how the misfortunes of the play-ground, as well as its triumphs, would be magnified when repeated in the serious business of after-years. I did not realize that some of us were sure to find ourselves on the wrong side in the shinny of politics, and to suffer the penalty that gives its title to that exciting game; that to some of us the demands of poverty would shout a perpetual “Pom-pom-pull-way!” that some would find the chase after fortune a game of cross-tag, where other objects of pursuit forever intervene as we are about to touch the golden skirts; that some would fly financial kites in very strong gales, with very slender strings; that some who had tested their skill on the shiners of the brook would ultimately become fishers of men; that for some the red lion of war would come out of his den, and for some the prisoner’s base would be a gloomy stockade.

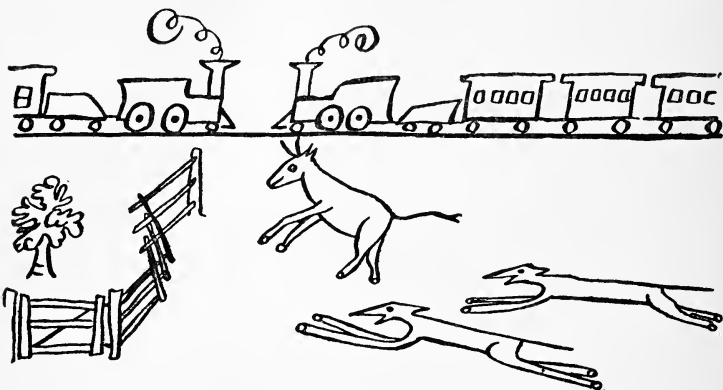
CHAPTER XII.

A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY.

A FEW days later I received through the post-office a copy of the paper published by the Twin Twins, and there was my story, in all the glory of plain print, with two illustrations. At the same time came a letter from the publishers, in which they explained that, as a friend had furnished the necessary engravings, they were enabled to print the story, and accordingly they awarded it the second prize, which they enclosed — three dollars.

When I looked at the engravings (fac-similes of which are presented on the next page), and when I remembered Sammy's mysteriously wounded hand, it seemed to me it was not difficult to guess who that friend was. I made him confess that he had done it, and gradually got from him the whole story. He had read in a cyclopædia a description of the process of wood engraving, and had then bought a few of the simplest tools and some blocks of box-wood, and set at work to draw and cut the pictures himself. He spoiled several blocks, before attaining the success here exhibited, and by a slip of one of the tools cut his hand pretty badly. I figured it up, and found

that he must have spent nearly all his prize money for the tools and blocks, which made me feel very uncomfort-



able, as my own prize money had thus come to me at the expense of his. The only way I could think of to adjust the matter was, to declare that I wanted to learn wood-

engraving, and ask him to sell me his tools, which finally he did, at the same price he paid for them. This left me sixty-five cents, net cash, as the avails of my story. Robert Maginnis was not so great a triumph in finance as in engineering.

Sammy and I sat on the boulder, talking over the progress of civilization and the prospects of literature, when Gouldburn Hinks joined us.

"Well, boys," said he, "we didn't do everything we expected to, but it was a good drama, wasn't it, now?"

"It was great fun," said Sammy.

"Does all civilization end in smoke?" said I.

"My father," said Gouldburn, "says he is afraid it will. He laughed heartily at the way we civilized those lurking savages, and said we had the true government ideas in that matter."

"What are you going to do next?" said I, speaking at random, and not having the least notion that he was going to do anything at all.

"I have been thinking about that," said Gouldburn, and have been reading an interesting old book of voyages. I think we might have a pretty thing in the way of a voyage of discovery."

"But we are hundreds of miles from the ocean," said Sammy.

"True," said Gouldburn, "but we are only hundreds of yards from the canal."

“What could you discover on the canal?” said I.

“Of course we shouldn’t discover any enchanted islands, or any active volcanoes, or any new races of men,” said he. “But there is always something to be discovered when anyone goes out of his beaten track.”

“That’s a good idea,” said Sammy. “Shall we go in canoes, or walk on the tow-path?”

“Neither,” said Gouldburn. “I think we can get a beautiful new canal-boat, ninety-eight feet long — and that’s as big as the biggest ship that Columbus had when he discovered America.”

“That sounds very handsome, but how are you going to get such a boat?” said Sammy.

“Do you remember the Iris?” said Gouldburn.

“Oh, yes, we remember the Iris.”

“Well, she hasn’t been sold yet. And Charlie Dillon tells me there’s a man out near the first lock who wants to buy her. But he won’t agree to take her until he sees her, and he can’t come down here because he’s sick, confined to his house, which is close by the canal. I thought perhaps Mr. Dillon would be glad to have us take her out there and show her to him. If we have a good day, and a good pair of horses, and get plenty of boys, and plenty of refreshments, and a few fire-works and things, we can make a beautiful voyage of it.”

“Yes,” said Sammy, “if we can get all those things, *and* the boat.”

"I think we can," said Gouldburn. "At any rate, there's nothing like trying. And now that you fellows have got a reputation as writers, you ought to be able to make a good account of the voyage, and perhaps I could help it out with a few sketches."

"What would you do with it?" said I.

"Publish it, of course, and get money for more enterprises," said Gouldburn.

"I don't believe you'd find much money in it," said Sammy; "but we might have an enjoyable day."

"The boat will not go without horses," said I. "But where are we going to get them?"

"I think father will let me take one," said Gouldburn.

"And perhaps I can get one of John Steele," said Sammy.

"Do you think Charlie can get the boat?" said I.

"No," said Gouldburn, "I don't believe he has much influence with his father. The best way will be for us to apply directly to Mr. Dilloner ourselves."

"What would be your argument?" said Sammy.

"The argument would be," said Gouldburn, "that we wouldn't hurt the boat the least bit, and would show her off to good advantage, and let that man out at the first lock have a chance to see her. Then perhaps it would result in a sale, which is what Mr. Dilloner built her for."

"That sounds reasonable," said Sammy. "And yet I'm afraid he'll not be willing to trust her with us. But

of course we'll stand by you, and go with you to see him, if you want us to."

"Yes," said I, "we'll stand by."

"Well, then," said Gouldburn, "as there's no time like the present time, suppose we go at once and see Mr. Dilloner."

Sammy and I agreed to this, and we all set out for the boat-yard.

We found Mr. Dilloner in his office. He was a large man, with a round, pleasant face, and an easy manner. When we knocked at the door, he said "Come in!" but when we entered he paid no attention to us till he had finished a letter. Then, as he was sealing and stamping it, he said:

"Well, my little men, what can I do for you?"

"We thought perhaps we could do something for you," said Gouldburn.

"Do you want to decorate a boat?"

"No, sir, but we would like to sell one."

"But I don't buy boats, I build them."

"That's just it — you build them to sell."

"Certainly!"

"And I believe you haven't sold the Iris yet."

"No, I am sorry to say she is still on my hands, though a man out at the first look would probably buy her if he could get here to see her."

"That's just it," said Gouldburn. "We thought we'd

like to take her out there and show her to him. If the man can't come to the boat, let the boat go to the man, like Mahomet's coffin."

"I thought it was a mountain that Mahomet exchanged calls with, not a coffin?" said Mr. Dilloner.

"Well, Mahomet's coffin did some sort of queer thing," said Gouldburn. "But you're president of the Board of Education, sir, and of course you know best."

"It doesn't greatly matter," said Mr. Dilloner, "I dare say the illustration is quite as good, whichever it was. But now tell me how you expect to get the Iris out to the first lock?"

"Father would let us take one of his horses, I think," said Gouldburn, "and John Steele has one; and if he could go along to drive, I think I could steer her, and these other two boys could be bow-hands."

Mr. Dilloner smiled.

"John Steele is all right," said he—"a very good man, and you are all right as far as you go, but you are not grown up yet."

"We could get a few more boys," said Gouldburn.

"No doubt you could," said Mr. Dilloner, smiling again. "But two boys are not always equal to one man. However, you seem to be enterprising, which I like, and I don't wish to discourage you. But, if you bring about a sale of the boat, what commission do you expect?"

Gouldburn seemed to be taken aback at the mention

of a commission, which word he understood only in its military sense. But he soon recovered himself, and, not wishing to let slip any honor or emolument that properly belonged to him, answered,

“I suppose I might be commissioned captain, and these two boys first and second mates.”

Mr. Dilloner burst into a hearty laugh.

“I did not mean that kind of commission,” said he—“though, by the way, you can have as many of those as you wish, for you have only to write them yourself. I meant to ask how much you would expect me to pay you for selling the boat. That is called a commission.”

Gouldburn, being somewhat humbled and disconcerted by his mistake, was not so quick as before to take advantage of an unexpected suggestion. He therefore replied honestly, but perhaps not shrewdly,

“We did not expect any pay at all.”

“Then what would be your object?” said Mr. Dilloner.

“We thought we’d get a few other boys, if you didn’t mind,” said Gouldburn, “and call it a voyage of discovery, and have a good time along the way. That would be fun for us, and profit for you.”

“Now I understand,” said Mr. Dilloner. “How many boys would you take?”

“About as many as the boat would hold,” said Gouldburn. “We thought the more the merrier.”

“That sounds hospitable and whole-souled,” said Mr. Dilloner. “But I think I wouldn’t crowd things. I rather like your scheme, and am inclined to let you try it. When do you wish to go?”

“Saturday would be the best day for us.”

“Very well, come in to-morrow, and I will give you an answer. I can’t imagine what you expect to discover—but that’s your lookout, not mine.”

Next day we called at the boat-yard office again, and learned, to our great delight, that we were to be permitted to make the voyage of discovery.

Mr. Dilloner said John Steele might come with his horse, and he of course would pay John for the service, while he himself would furnish two other horses.

“The load will be so light,” said he, “that with three horses you can go right along at a trot, like a packet, which will be much pleasanter for you all.”

He also said he would send a man from the boat-yard to steer the Iris.

“You three,” he added, “can be bow-hands.”

“What will our duties be?” said I, for I was very ignorant of nautical affairs, and I knew that if I concealed my ignorance from Mr. Dilloner and depended on being instructed by Gouldburn, I should be likely to get the wrong lesson.

“They will not be very difficult,” said the boat-builder, with a twinkle in his eye. “You must look at the bow

of the boat once in a while, to make sure that she is not going wrong end foremost, and you may spend the rest of the time in bowing to acquaintances that you recognize along the way."

It seemed to me that he was slyly poking fun at us. I knew there were bow-hands on canal-boats, and I didn't believe they were there for nothing.

"Isn't there a patent dead-eye on the Iris?" said Sammy.

"Certainly. We put them on all our boats now," said Mr. Dilloner.

"And when there is an accident, like going wrong at a tow-path bridge," said Sammy, "isn't it the duty of a bow-hand to step on the lever, quick, and release the tow-line, so that the horses will not be hauled over into the canal?"

"Yes," said Mr. Dilloner, "that is one of the duties of a bow-hand. But I hope we shall not have any such accident on this trip."

I was proud of Sammy; for I felt that his question had restored our dignity. Who could tell how many horses' and other lives we might save by our skill and vigilance as bow-hands?

"How large a company do you expect to have?" said Mr. Dilloner.

We had talked this all over, and Gouldburn was ready with the answer.

“About a dozen boys, besides ourselves,” he said.

“Any girls?” said Mr. Dilloner.

We looked at one another, and said we had not thought about them.

“It seems to me there ought to be a few young ladies,” said Mr. Dilloner—“if they would enjoy the trip; and I don’t see why they shouldn’t.”

“There were no women in any of the voyages of discovery that the ‘Book of Commerce’ tells about,” said I.

“Very true, my little man!” said Mr. Dilloner, and, observing that the boys were inclined to laugh at me for mentioning my favorite authority, he added, “I’m glad to see that you remember what you read. But if you’ll let the girls have the fun of the voyage, they needn’t bother themselves about the discoveries. Mrs. Dilloner will go, and our two daughters; and if any of the boys want to invite their sisters, tell them to do so. I will furnish luncheon enough for all of you; but if your mothers want to send additional sweetmeats, bring them along. We will set a long table on deck, and all refreshments that you bring will go into the common stock.”

“And will you go with us?” said Sammy.

“Oh, no,” said Mr. Dilloner, “I am too busy and must be excused. Besides, this is your expedition, and I expect you to conduct it yourselves. But now, my little mariners, I can’t talk with you any more to-day, for I am full of business. The *Iris* will start exactly at nine o’clock,

Saturday morning, if the weather is good ; and to warn any of you that may be tardy, the boat-yard gun will be fired ten minutes before John Steele cracks his whip and says ‘ G’lang ! ’ ”

I don’t know how we managed to keep our minds on our studies during the remaining school-days of that week. At every recess and intermission the enthusiastic Gouldburn had some new phase of the expedition to present, or wanted to consult us about some proposed addition to the list of those who were to be invited. Miss Safford, the teacher to whom we recited geography and history, and who used to tell us a story every Friday, learned what was going on, and that week she told us the story of the Golden Fleece.

I was already familiar with the tale, having read it in the “ Book of Commerce,” and I had also read some of the attempted explanations of it. But when I asked the teacher if she thought it true that the expedition was really a journey to China to bring back silk—the first that had ever been seen in Europe—the boys, led by Gouldburn Hinks and Benny Whaples, hissed me down. They said they didn’t want the romance taken out of it by any such explanation.

“ If it had been a m-m-m-mercantile expedition,” said Babbity Ban, “ J-j-j-jason wouldn’t have let in forty-nine fellers on the g-g-g-ground floor. He would have tried to make a m-m-monopoly of it.”

I did not understand the meaning of the term "ground floor" in that connection, but Babbity did, for his father was a speculator.

The dawn of Saturday promised everything that we could wish in the way of weather.

My sister Lucy didn't care to join the expedition. She didn't say why, but I supposed that years had sobered her (she was almost twenty) and she looked upon this affair as too juvenile for her dignity. Whereupon I fell into a strain of sombre reflection, and when I quoted Ossian—"Age is dark and unlovely"—she wanted to know what age I referred to.

I set out alone, carrying the basket that contained my mother's contribution to the table, and soon fell in with Gouldburn Hinks. By his side walked Jammis & Towjer with a basket in his mouth, and in Gouldburn's hand was a large roll of paper.

"What have you there?" said I.

"The sailing-charts," said he, "and the compass is in my pocket."

"I didn't know that we needed chart and compass to navigate the canal," said I.

"No," said he, "we wouldn't if we were mere navigators. If all we cared about was getting a cargo of goods from one end of the canal to the other, we'd be licking the horses instead of looking at charts. But with explorers it's different."

"How is it different?" said I.

"Because," said he, "an explorer wants to know what kind of country he is passing through. He wants to know what is there, and what he is likely to find; and when he discovers anything he wants to know all about its surroundings."

"That sounds reasonable," said I. "But where did you get the charts?"

"I made them," said he. "Father has a map of the county, with every road, bridge, and farm-house put down on it. And I went to the surveyor's office, in the weigh-lock building, and he let me look at the section maps of the canal. And I knew some things that are not on any of the maps; for uncle Gilbert lives out that way, and I have been there often."

"Then your charts ought to be about the best in existence," said I.

"Yes," said he, slowly, "I think perhaps they are."

"And where did you get the compass?" said I.

"I made that too," said he.

"Let me see it," said I.

"No use to try to show it to you here," he answered. "Wait till we get to the water."

"What difference does that make?" said I.

"All the difference in the world," said Gouldburn.

"It's a water-compass."

We found the Iris trimmed up for the occasion. An

American flag was looped along the low railing around the stern, and festoons of evergreen hung from the cabin windows. A temporary railing of ropes supported by low posts had been placed around the edge of the entire deck, and there were light trestles and boards to form the table and benches.

More than half the company were already there, and many of the others could be seen coming with their baskets in their hands.

Benny Whaples brought his accordion, intending to enliven the voyage with music; but when he found that Mr. Dilloner had engaged a professional organ-grinder, who was seated on his organ at the bow of the boat, he went right down into the cabin and put away the accordion. He said no real musician would play where such a thing as a hand-organ was admitted.

The regular bow-hands looked unfavorably upon the intruder, and I took pains to instruct him to keep away from the patent dead-eye, for there was no telling at what instant we might want to snap it off to avert a calamity.

Mrs. Dilloner and her two daughters were there, and the sisters of four of the boys—Fanny Bantel, Susie Berthrong, Dora Smith, and Millicent Crawford. The whole number of persons in the expedition was twenty-five, including John Steele, the steersman, and the organ-grinder—or “the band,” as the boys called him. Jammis & Towjer, as he sat dignifiedly on the after-deck and

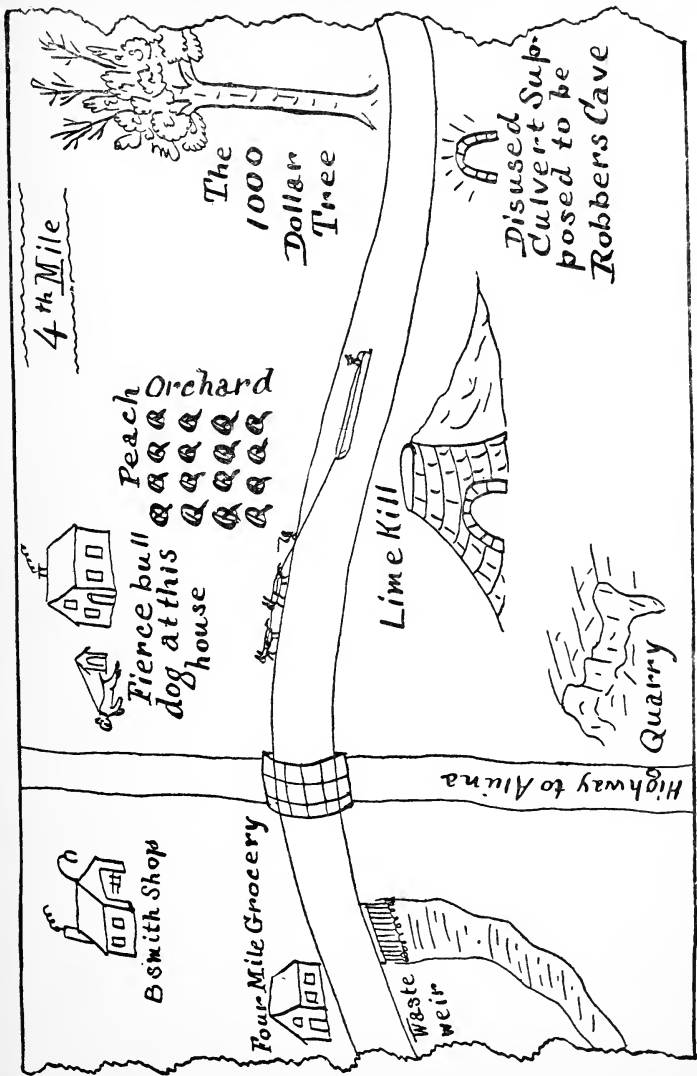
watched the proceedings, appeared to consider himself a twenty-sixth person.

The numerous baskets had been carried down to the cabin, the boat-yard gun had been fired, the ten minutes had elapsed, and John Steele was about to start the horses, when we saw Pete Ruyter coming cross-lots as rapidly as he could run and climb fences. Of course we waited for him. As he came up, out of breath, and hastily sprang aboard, he tripped and went sprawling on the deck, while his basket found its way into the canal. Jammis & Towjer at once plunged in after it, swam to the tow-path with it, and thence jumped aboard and set it down on the deck, with an air that seemed to say, "What would become of you all if I were not here to take care of you!"

"Lucky is it," said Pete, "that not cakes I brought, but harvest apples, which cries not for canal water."

Our company was now complete. John Steele cracked his long whip and said "G'lang!" The horses straightened themselves out in their harness, the tow-line rose dripping from the water and became taut, I found myself actually looking over the bow to see if the Iris was going forward, the band struck up "Farewell to Lochaber," Mr. Dilloner took off his hat and waved us adieu from the berme bank, and "the Argonauties," as Joe Lucas called us, were off on their expedition.

Mrs. Dilloner inquired for the names of all the boys,



A PORTION OF GOULDBURN'S SAILING-CHART.

and wrote in her memorandum-book a list of the entire company.

Then Gouldburn Hinks intimated that he would like to show her the sailing-charts, and she told him to spread them out on the table and let us all see them.

They proved to be long strips of paper on which was traced the course of the canal, with the bridges, culverts, weirs, neighboring houses, etc., all represented. Each strip of paper covered one mile of the course to be passed over between the city and the first lock. I present here a fac-simile of a portion of the fourth mile as it was represented on Gouldburn's sailing-chart.

Some of the boys asked, as I had, what was the use of a sailing-chart on a canal, and Gouldburn answered them as he had answered me, by explaining the difference between explorers and mere navigators.

"You see," said he, "if a man finds an iron mine, it is important to know whether there is a coal mine in the neighborhood."

"And when a boy finds a peach orchard," said Frank Bradfield, "he wants to know whether there is a bull-dog in the neighborhood."

"The boys laughed so much at this that Gouldburn rolled up his charts and was about to put them away. But Mrs. Dilloner told him to spread the first one on the table, and she fastened it with a pin at each corner.

"It will be interesting for reference as we go along,"

said she, "and when we have passed over this mile we can spread out the second chart in place of it."

"He has a water-compass, too," said I, and Mrs. Dillon asked him to show it to us.

Gouldburn said it wasn't much of a compass, but drew from his pocket half of the outside case of an old german-silver watch, went to the cabin, and filled it with water. He set this on the table, and then produced a common sewing-needle, which had been rubbed on a toy-magnet and was fastened across a very thin, light piece of wood. This he placed on the water in the watch-case, and it slowly swung around till the needle pointed north and south. The applause of the company, when they saw the performance of the rude little instrument, appeared to go far toward counteracting the effect on Gouldburn's mind of the sarcastic remark about the peach orchard.

"I suppose that thing is so we won't get lost," said Millicent Crawford—"tells us the way home, same as daddy long-leg spider tells where the cows are."

"That's it exactly," said Mrs. Dillon.

The girls appeared to be very much interested in the charts, keeping watch, as we went along, to see how many of the objects there laid down they could recognize, and expressing great delight when they felt sure of a red barn or a white lime-kiln.

The story of the Thousand-dollar Tree was called for, and it transpired that seven boys in our company had

seven different versions of it. The only item on which they all agreed was, that that particular tree *was* the Thousand-dollar Tree, and those three dead branches at the top represented the three ciphers. Each boy was confident that his version was correct, and the company therefore were left to make their own choice. There seemed to be a general disposition to reject Maurice Smith's matter-of-fact story, that the tree simply marked the boundary of a tract of land that had been purchased many years before for a thousand dollars, and to accept Dicky Barker's. Dicky told it in this way :

"Once there was a beautiful young American lady named Mary Meriwether, and she was going to marry a Russian nobleman, whose name I can't pronounce. It was something-offsky. Her father, who kept the Four-mile Grocery, was going to give her a marriage portion of a thousand dollars, and he had the money ready in the house, all in gold. The people were invited, the cake was made, and everything was ready. But at midnight before the wedding-day, a rejected suitor, named Johnny St. Paul, crept into the house through a cellar window, stole the money, and carried it off to that tree, where he climbed up and hid it in a squirrel's nest.

"They didn't miss the money until the carriages were ready to go to the church, and the nobleman said 'Now bring on your thousand dollars.' Then there was great consternation. The gold was nowhere to be found. The

nobleman got mad and said he didn't believe they ever had any thousand dollars, any way. He said he wasn't going to share his crown with a beggar, and so he made them give back the engagement ring, and he sailed for Moscow in the next steamer.

"Johnny St. Paul called around in a few days, and asked Miss Meriwether if she would marry him, in case he could find the missing money. She was crying dreadfully, but she was a very spirited girl and she told him No-sir-ee, she wasn't going to be the wife of any blacksmith, when she had almost married a nobleman. And, besides, she said she believed it was some friend of his that had taken the money. This was coming awfully close to the truth, and if it hadn't been for her tears she would have seen that he blushed like a Michigan rose.

"In six weeks Miss Meriwether died of a broken heart. Mr. Meriwether became bankrupt and was sold out by the sheriff, and after that he had to teach school for a living. The next October, when a sportsman fired at a squirrel in that tree, he brought down the nest, and the gold pieces rolled out on the grass. Johnny St. Paul was convicted of the crime, and he is still working out his sentence, making shoes in Auburn prison, though he is now a gray-headed man."

"How could they prove that he stole the money?" said Harvey Allen, attacking what seemed to us to be the only weak point in the narrative.

"Nobody," Dicky answered, promptly, "could go up that tree without climbers on his feet, and Johnny was the only person in the town that owned a pair. He made them himself, for that very purpose."

This seemed perfectly satisfactory, and no further doubt of Dicky's story was expressed. At all events, it was the most interesting of the seven versions.

The horses kept up a steady jog-trot, and, as we glided along, the chief delight of the boys was to sit in a row on the edge of the deck, with their feet hanging over and their forearms resting on the rope railing, and make comments and conjectures on everything that we passed.

The Wide Water was a place where the canal had once made a great bend. In a later improvement the channel was straightened, but the old channel was not filled up, and the earth between the two channels was taken away; so that as we passed this we seemed to be skirting the shore of a pretty lake.

At one point two handsome dogs came across a meadow, stood on the berme bank, and looked at us. They seemed to comprehend quickly that it was a frolic, and set out to race with the boat. One of them could have outrun it easily; but the other was lame and hardly able to keep up, and it was quite pathetic to see the well one first yield to the excitement and bound ahead enthusiastically, then remember his lame brother and turn back to sympathize with him. At Sammy Whitney's

suggestion, John Steele stopped the horses, and the steersman guided the boat over to that side of the canal, in order that we might take the dogs on board and give them a little ride. But Jammis & Towjer, seeing the intention, was on the alert in a moment. He put himself on guard at the point where they would have to come on board, and made it very evident that the immediate result would be a combat. So we gave it up.

At another point, where the canal ran between high embankments, above the level of the adjoining fields, we saw a dilapidated canal-boat in the middle of a corn-field.

"What is that?" we asked of the steersman.

"Wreck of the Goneril," he answered, and we could still read a part of her name across the stern. "She went out," he continued, "when the great break occurred right here two years ago. A hundred and fifty yards of that embankment went down one night in a minute, like so much wet sugar, and she floated out there on the flood. The driver just had time to cut the tow-line, and he and the horses saved themselves by swimming. The captain and his family woke up when she grounded there, and when they heard the rush of the water they knew what had happened, without going to the cabin windows. There were lots of breaks that year. She had a big cargo of cheese for the New York market. No insurance."

Here he braced himself and pushed the tiller far over to one side, as we were about to pass a boat that was com-

ing in the opposite direction. Then he alluded again to the wreck.

"Do you notice her name?" said he— two letters broke off, so that it says 'Goner,' and she is a goner, sure enough. That is what I call one of nature's own jokes— nobody made it, just pure accident."

"Might the embankment break again?" said Dora Smith.

"It might, miss," said the steersman, solemnly.

"And then would our boat go out there in the fields?"

"It would, undoubtedly."

"Can't we hurry past this place?"

"We're going now as fast as we can," said the steersman, and the girls turned away from him and studied the chart again to see if there were any more such dangerous embankments.

Thus we jogged along until we came in sight of a flag on a staff that towered above and beyond an apple orchard.

"What is that?" we exclaimed.

"That is the flag at the first lock," said the steersman; and when we had passed the next bend in the canal the first lock was in plain sight.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHAT WE FOUND.

"Now, boys," said Mrs. Dilloner, "what are the arrangements for your proposed exploration?"

It appeared from our answer that the arrangements were not very definite. At her suggestion, therefore, we took seats around the table and discussed the question.

"We shall spend some time at the lock," said she, "and have our luncheon there. You might go off and do your exploring while we are preparing the table."

This plan was adopted at once as excellent.

"I propose," said Sammy Whitney, "that we divide into two parties, and each take one side of the canal."

This also was generally acceptable.

"And let us see," said Gouldburn Hinks, "which party will discover the most wonderful things."

"Agreed!" said all.

"There ought to be a prize," said Frank Bradfield.

"I will furnish a prize," said Mrs. Dilloner.

"But who is going to decide just how won-won-wonderful each thing is?" said Babbity Ban.

"We ought to fix a scale of values," said Fred Craw-

ford, "as the Sportsman's Club does when it has its annual hunt. A partridge counts so many, and a gray squirrel so many, and a quail so many, and so on. And the side that brings in the most, the other side has to pay for the supper."

"How can we make a scale of values when we don't know what we're going to discover?" said Maurice Smith.

This seemed conclusive as to any scale. I then suggested that when we came back and reported, it be left to Mrs. Dilloner to say what each discovery was worth, in her opinion, and that she mark it down and at the end add up the figures. This was at once agreed to. It was also agreed that, although some of us might have the luck to make several discoveries, each should be permitted to put in but one for the competition.

"There will be two prizes," said Mrs. Dilloner, "one for the side that scores the most points, and one for the individual that finds the nicest or prettiest or most useful thing."

This announcement was received with applause.

All the boys were to join the hunt, as a matter of course, and the girls were invited. But all the girls preferred to remain with Mrs. Dilloner and spread the luncheon, except Millicent Crawford, who said she thought the fields much prettier than the canal, and the boys were nicer than canal-horses, and she would go with them.

The boys, after a little consultation, fixed upon Sammy Whitney and me as the captains, to choose sides. Wally Durney tossed a penny between us, and Sammy won the first choice.

He chose Babington Bantel.

I chose Fred Crawford.

He chose Frank Bradfield.

I chose Benny Whaples.

He chose Wally Durney.

I chose Gouldburn Hinks.

He chose Charlie Dilloner.

I chose Dicky Barker.

He chose Andy Berthrong.

I chose Harvey Allen.

He chose Pete Ruyter.

I chose Maurice Smith.

He chose Joe Lucas.

I chose Millicent Crawford.

As Sammy had had the first choice of men, I was given the choice of territory, and I chose what the boatmen used to call "the heel-path side" of the canal—which is the opposite side from the tow-path. My company immediately filed across the little foot-bridge at the lock and sauntered down the road. Most of them soon wandered off into the fields and woods on either side, but Fred and Millicent and I continued in the highway.

We came to a quarry, where men were getting out

great blocks of limestone, and stopped a little while to watch the operation.

At another place four horses were walking round and round in a barnyard, sheaves of grain were being carried in at the big door of the barn on one side, and loose straw was coming out in a stream from the other side, while there was a tremendous and steady buzzing, and half a dozen men seemed as busy as the occupants of an ant-hill. We went into the barnyard and took a look at them, but it was too dusty for Millicent to stay long. "Look out for that gearin'," called one of the men to us, and we saw that we were stepping over a long iron rod near the ground, which was revolving rapidly, carrying the power from the tread-mill in the yard to the threshing-machine in the barn.

Farther down the road we strolled into an unfenced lot that was dotted all over with old stumps, and in one corner was a clear spring. While Fred was gone to the spring, Millicent gathered a handful of sorrel beside one of the stumps, and coming to me said:

"Do you know which is sheep sorrel and which is snake sorrel?"

I confessed that I did not know.

"Because," she continued, "sheep sorrel is real nice to eat, but they say snake sorrel is poison."

I took the handful she had gathered, examined it, and called her attention to the fact that it contained two

kinds of leaves—some that had projections like ears near the stem, and some that were plain.

“I suppose those must be the two kinds,” said I.

“Which is snake, and which is sheep?” said she.

“I don’t know,” said I. “But I will eat some first, and if it doesn’t hurt me, you can have all you want.”

“But suppose it does hurt you?” said she, looking alarmed—“suppose it kills you down dead, what will your mother say? You mustn’t do it! I can’t have you do it! I wouldn’t let you do it for a thousand-dollar King of Offsky.”

“I don’t care for Offskys,” said I. “But I’ll do it for you,” and I put half a dozen of the leaves into my mouth.

In this I was not altogether reckless, for I had thought of a principle of selection. It seemed to me that, as sheep had ears and snakes had not, it was most probable that the leaves with ears were the harmless sheep sorrel, and accordingly I picked out those.

Millicent stood in front of me, looking into my face, with her little mind at extreme tension and the tears ready to start from her eyes. As she saw the motion in my throat when I swallowed the mouthful, she caught her breath and seemed to rise on tiptoe. Then she looked steadily at me for about three seconds, as if expecting to see me drop dead; and when, at the expiration of that time, no such calamity had taken place,

she came down upon her feet, clapped her hands, and shouted :

“ Oh, goody ! ”

“ The leaves with ears are the sheep sorrel,” said I, and she proceeded to gather some, for most children are fond of the spicy taste of that herb.

“ Oh, Freddy,” said she, when her brother returned from the spring, “ you must eat nothing but ears ! ”

“ What ? ” said Fred, and then the whole matter had to be explained to him.

“ That’s all very well,” said he, “ but if sheep sorrel is our only discovery, there won’t be many prizes for us. The fact is, I don’t see what anybody can expect to discover in an old settled country like this. I’m just going to make up something out of my own head. If I can’t get a prize, I can fool the boys.”

It seemed to me that his observation was very just, and we agreed that it must be time to turn back, discovery or no discovery.

On the return walk Millicent lingered at a little green nook in a fence-corner, searched in the grass, and came back triumphantly with a four-leaved clover.

Standing on a bit of stone, she called to me, and when I came up she took a pin from the lapel of my jacket (where I always carried two or three) and decorated me with the lucky emblem.

“ There,” said she, surveying the clover and me with

a smile, "now you are almost as pretty as Sammy Whitney, and Sammy is a real pretty boy."

For an instant I thought the pin must have penetrated much deeper than my jacket.

When we arrived at the lock, we saw the young explorers straggling back from various directions, and before long all were gathered again on the boat. None of them seemed to have brought their discoveries with them, unless perhaps Jammis & Towjer, who walked on board with a large ham bone in his mouth.

We learned that Mrs. Dilloner had negotiated the sale of the Iris to the sick man, who was rapidly getting well, and he, sitting in a large arm-chair, was brought upon the deck by John Steele and the lock-tender.

The luncheon was prettily spread on the long table, and in the centre was a large frosted cake, with a finger-ring stuck into it at one side. Mrs. Dilloner explained that the piece containing the ring was the individual prize, and the remainder of the cake was the prize for the side that should score the highest number of points.

Mrs. Dilloner sat at one end of the table, and the purchaser of the Iris at the other. The girls sat next to them, and the boys were ranged between, each company of explorers on their own side.

When the luncheon had been disposed of, and the ice-cream was brought up from what one of the girls called "the ground floor of the boat," and dished out, Mrs.

Dilloner called upon Sammy Whitney to name his discovery.

"I think," said Sammy, speaking slowly and impressively, "that I must have discovered a race of giants."

Everybody forgot ice-cream for a moment, and looked wonderingly at Sammy.

"Because," he continued, "I saw men cutting down a forest, and the men were twice as high as the tallest of the trees."

Exclamations went up from every part of the table, most of them expressing extreme incredulity.

At length Wally Durney, who was fond of exact definitions and measurements, asked, "What kind of trees were the tallest ones?"

"Timothy trees," answered Sammy; and a light broke over Mrs. Dilloner's face, but the boys and girls did not immediately see the catch.

"And what were the other trees?" said Benny Whaples, with the idea of seconding his friend Wally.

"Clover trees," said Sammy, and then the whole table burst into a roar.

"Oh," said Pete Ruyter, "you means the mower men what scythes down the grass."

"Yes," said Sammy, "that is their other name."

"That's very clever," said Mrs. Dilloner, when the uproar had subsided. "I think you should have about *ten*

for it," and she marked it so on her memorandum-book. She then called upon me for my discovery.

"I saw Archimedes," said I.

"What kind of fish are those?" said Andy Berthrong.

Mrs. Dilloner explained to him—and of course incidentally to all the boys—that Archimedes was not a kind of fish, but an ancient engineer and inventor, whose most famous saying was, that he could move the world if he only had a lever long enough and could get an outside place to stand on.

"What was Mr. Kimmedes doing when you saw him?" said Joe Lucas. "And what does the R stand for?"

"He was moving the world," said I. "But I don't know his Christian name."

"How long was the lever, and what was it made of?" said Wally Durney.

"It was iron, about six feet long," said I.

Everybody was perfectly silent, as if trying to guess a riddle. Finally Charlie Dilloner said:

"Well, tell us how it was."

"He was moving one rock at a time," said I, "and if he keeps on long enough he will move the whole world."

The applause that followed this was not quite equal to that called forth by Sammy's discovery; but Mrs. Dilloner said she thought it ought to have about the same mark, and she accordingly put down *ten* opposite my name.

"Was that the man with the barcrow, working in the quarry?" said Millicent.

"Yes, dear," said Mrs. Dilloner, giving the boys a look that prevented them from laughing.

I was thankful to have got through so well, for I was very doubtful about the joke, the cue for which I had got from Fred, when he said there was nothing to discover and he was going to conjure up something in his own mind.

"Babington Bantel, what did you discover?" said Mrs. Dilloner.

"Well, if we're going into a-a-ancient history," said Babbity, "I may as well m-m-mention that I saw Mr. Her-her-hercules."

"How did you know it was Mr. Hercules?" said Maurice Smith.

"Because he was pup-pup-performing one of his twelve labors," said Babbity.

"Which one?" said Maurice.

"He was c-c-cleaning out a st-st-stable," said Babbity.

The character of this rude parody on my discovery was perceived at once, and it was vociferously applauded, everybody looking at me as much as to say, "The laugh is on you."

"That does very well as an impromptu joke," said Mrs. Dilloner, "but as a discovery it is only a parody, and cannot be said to amount to much. I can mark it only about *three*."

"S-s-serves me right!" said Babbity. "I ought to have known better than to d-d-dip into the classics, as father says."

Fred Crawford was reminded that his turn came next.

"I saw an animal," said he, "that jumped thirty times its own height at a single jump."

"It must have been the cow that jumped over the moon," said Dicky Barker.

"No, it was not a cow," said Fred.

"You didn't have time to go to Australia and see a kangaroo," said Gouldburn Hinks.

"No," said Fred, "it was not a kangaroo."

"How high was the animal?" said Wally Durney.

"About a third of an inch," said Fred.

"Oooh!" said everybody.

"You *mean* an insect, but you *said* an animal," said Charlie Dilloner. "Is that fair?"

Mrs. Dilloner decided that an insect was an animal, and Fred's discovery was all right.

"The enormous power of insects in proportion to their size," said she, "is one of the wonders of natural history. You did well to observe it. I think I must mark you about *eight*."

"Is that good for Freddy?" said Millicent.

"Yes, dear," said Mrs. Dilloner, "that is very good for Freddy." And I hoped the compliment comforted him

for the fact that his was the first discovery that won no popular applause.

"Frank Bradfield, what did you find?" said the hostess.

"I found a volcano," said Frank, "and climbed up the side and looked in at the crater."

"Was it an active or a passive volcano?" said Harvey Allen, getting his geography and his grammar a little mixed.

"It was active," said Frank.

"Then I suppose rocks and hot lava were flying out of it," said Harvey.

"Oh, no!" said Frank. "Rocks were going into it."

"How were they going in?"

"A man with a wheelbarrow trundled them up the long slope to the top, and dumped them in," said Frank.

"What did he do that for?"

"Because he wanted to make as much quicklime as possible."

"A lime-kiln!" exclaimed everybody.

"Yes," said Gouldburn Hinks, "and it does look like a volcano. I admit that discovery is good, though it isn't on our side."

"It is an *artificial* volcano," said Frank.

Mrs. Dillon decided that a lime-kiln was an artificial volcano, and marked Frank *seven*.

Benny Whaples was called *next*.

"I saw Peter the Great, and talked with him," said Benny.

"How knew you Peter the Great?" said Pete Ruyter.

"Because he had two big keys in his hand," said Benny.

Everybody was silent for some time, trying in vain to think of the clew. At last Sammy Whitney said :

"Didn't you mean to say *Saint* Peter?"

"Aren't they both the same?" said Benny.

"Not exactly," said Mrs. Dilloner; "Saint Peter was one of the disciples, and he is commonly represented with two keys."

"But Peter the Great worked in a boat-yard; it says so in the 'Book of Commerce,'" said I.

"There!" said Benny, "I saw that man too. I felt sure I had seen both of the Peters."

There was a great laugh at Benny's logic, and when it subsided our hostess remarked that she thought the two Peters were worth about two apiece, and she would mark Benny *four*.

Joe Lucas raised the point that we were each allowed to put in but one discovery, and Benny couldn't put in both of his Peters.

Mrs. Dilloner decided that Joe's argument was good, and cut down Benny's score to *two*.

Wally Durney's turn came next.

"I saw a dog that doesn't like butter," said he.

"That's impossible; all dogs are fond of butter," said Frank Bradfield, who owned three dogs and considered himself an expert.

"Maybe it was only cooking-butter," said Millicent Crawford.

"I suppose it was rancid butter," said Maurice Smith.

"No," said Wally, "it was good sweet butter, perfectly fresh."

"Perhaps it was an iron dog, to hold a mooring-line; and butter would make the line slip," said Dicky Barker.

"No," said Wally, "a live dog, a large black Newfoundland."

"Pup-pup-perhaps it's for the same reason that J-j-j-jack didn't like his supper, b-b-because he couldn't get it," said Babbity Ban.

"No, that's not it," said Wally.

"Then *why* doesn't he like butter?" said Harvey Allen.

"Because," said Wally, "he has to churn every other day, and he hates it. When he sees them getting the churn and the tread-mill ready, he tries to sneak away."

This was not vociferously applauded, but it was admitted to be pretty good, and Mrs. Dilloner marked Wally *six*.

Gouldburn Hinks was next called upon.

"I saw falls greater than Niagara," said he.

"I suppose you mean a distant shower," said Sammy Whitney.

"Or falling stars," said Maurice Smith.

"Is Niagara bigger as a year?" said Pete Ruyter, addressing Mrs. Dilloner.

"They can hardly be compared," said she, while some of the boys snickered; "but I don't believe Gouldburn means the fall of the year."

"No," said Gouldburn, "I mean real falls—a cataract."

"We give it up—tell us," said Sammy.

"When I first saw the cataract," said Gouldburn, "it was a waste-weir, where the water of the canal overflows when there is a little too much."

"Why," said Wally Durney, interrupting, "if the whole canal broke loose the torrent wouldn't be equal to Niagara."

"Of course not," said Gouldburn. "But when I made a pin-hole in the crown of my hat, and put a drop of water in the pin-hole, and held the hat over my face and looked at the cataract through the drop, then, as I tell you, I *saw* the falls larger than Niagara. It all depends on how you see it."

Joe Lucas, encouraged by his previous success, tried to raise another point against our side by arguing that Gouldburn had not discovered his wonderful thing, but had made it himself.

"But he discovered the way to make it," said Mrs. Dilloner, "and his study of optics, and construction of a water-lens, is very creditable to him. I think the objection is not good. I shall mark him *ten*."

Our side applauded heartily.

"Charlie," said his mother, "it is your turn now."

"I saw a cow," said Charlie, "who wouldn't toss a dog, no matter how much he worried her."

"Is it correct to say 'a cow who?'" inquired Harvey Allen.

"It would be better to say 'a cow that,'" answered Mrs. Dilloner.

"Never mind the grammar—guess the riddle," said Charlie, a little nettled.

"I guess it was a dead cow," said Harvey.

"A dead cow would be past worrying," said Charlie.

"I guess it was the dog-star," said Benny Whaples, in a random flight of imagination, which was met by derisive laughter.

"Did you set a dog on her?" said I.

"No, I did not. There was no dog in sight," said Charlie.

"Then how do you know she wouldn't toss one?"

"Because," said he, "she had no horns; she was a mooly cow."

This could not be disputed, and the boys applauded it

as perfectly satisfactory, while Charlie's mother marked him *five*.

"I wish they were all mooly cows; I am afraid of them," said Dora Smith.

"Dicky Barker, what wonderful thing did you discover?" said Mrs. Dilloner.

"I saw two trout fried in three pans, and there was a whole trout in each pan," said Dicky.

"That is an old and famous problem," said Mrs. Dilloner, "and it has never been solved before."

"I suppose," said Babbity Ban, "they were c-c-cruel enough to put the trout in alive, and make them f-f-flop back and forth from pan to pan?"

"No," said Dicky, "they were not alive."

"Maybe twins was the trout?" said Pete Ruyter.

"No," said Dicky, "there are no twin fishes, except those in that round picture in the almanac."

"I don't believe we can guess; tell us how it was done," said Sammy Whitney.

"I stopped at the kitchen door of a farm-house," said Dicky, "to ask for a drink of water. The farmer's girl laid down a book when I knocked, and when I told her what I wanted, she said she would give me a glass of water or a glass of milk if I would help her guess a riddle that she had just come to in a story. 'What is it?' said I, and she read it to me, 'How to fry two trout in three pans and have a trout in each pan.' 'Does the book

give the answer?' said I. 'No,' said she, 'it does not; and the story says nobody could do it.' I sat down on the step, and put my head on my hand, and thought a long time. Then I said 'Where are your pans?' 'Here they are,' said she, and set out three on the table. 'Have you any trout?' said I. 'No,' said she, 'but we have some bullheads, which will do just as well.' 'All right; bring on your bullheads,' said I. She brought two. I put the first pan inside of the second pan, and put one of the trout into the first pan. Then I put the other bull-head into the third pan. 'There,' said I, 'put those on the stove just as they are, and you will fry two bullheads in three pans and have a trout in each pan.'

The boys on both sides gave Dicky's exploit the heartiest applause. "It is the wisdom that five centuries have been waiting for," said Mrs. Dilloner, and she marked him *eleven*.

"Andy Berthrong comes next," said she.

"I found a diamond necklace," said Andy, as I understood him.

"Where did you find it?" said I.

"In the bed of a brook," said he.

"Did you give it right back to the lady that lost it?" said Millicent Crawford.

"Not yet," said Andy; "I thought I'd bring it here and show it to the company first."

"I presume they are glass diamonds, for a doll," said Fanny Bantel.

"No glass about it," said Andy, while he fumbled in his pocket. "Here it is," and he drew out a small lozenge-shaped stone and handed it to Mrs. Dilloner.

"Do you call this a diamond necklace?" said she.

"Will you admit that it is a diamond?" said Andy.

"It has the shape that we call diamond," said she, "and as we have no other tests here, I suppose we must admit it to be a diamond."

"Well, then," said Andy, "unless you can find that it has a neck, of course you must say that it is a diamond neck-less."

This was hissed and derided. Mrs. Dilloner said the pun was so bad she thought she ought to mark Andy *minus five*.

"I object," said Sammy Whitney. "That would be fining our side five points, and nothing was said about any fines. Of course you can refuse to give him anything for it, if the pun is too bad, but I think you ought not to take away any of the points that we have fairly made."

Mrs. Dilloner said the argument was good, and contented herself with marking Andy *zero*.

She next called Harvey Allen.

"My attention," said Harvey, solemnly, "was attracted to a wagon, a four-wheeled wagon. The right-hand front

wheel and the left-hand hind wheel were going round so fast that you could not see the spokes."

"'L-l-lectricity?" said Babbity Ban.

"No, I think there was no electricity about it," said Harvey.

"Were they turning backward or forward?" said Wally Durney.

"Forward," said Harvey.

"What were the other two wheels doing?" said Sammy Whitney.

"They were whirling around too," said Harvey.

"Oh," said Babbity Ban, "the wagon was gug-gug-going somewhere?"

"I should say it was," said Harvey, "and from the way the driver lashed the horses I think he was in a hurry to get there."

Our side applauded, but the boys on the other side said "Pshaw! They didn't think that was much of a joke."

Mrs. Dilloner said she thought Harvey's jest was worth about *two*.

"Peter Ruyter," said she, "what did you see that was wonderful?"

"I nothing saw," answered Pete.

"What did it look like?" said Dicky Barker.

"Like sixty looked it," said Pete, and then all the boys burst into a roar of laughter, while Pete looked confused and abashed.

"If you saw nothing," said Mrs. Dilloner, "and it looked like sixty, there is no way but to take the average. That is *thirty*."

This took away the breath of the boys on our side, and it was lucky that the umpire was a woman. But we submitted with what grace we could, while the boys on the other side of the table broke out into smiles as one after another realized what a big addition their score had received. Pete himself bore it very modestly, and seemed to be fully conscious that there was no real justice in giving him three times the credit, for seeing nothing at all, that had been awarded to the best of the other observers. Mrs. Dilloner's sympathies had been aroused for Pete when the boys laughed at him, and she did what is often done in more important matters when a gush of sentiment overflows common-sense.

"Maurice Smith," said she, "we would like now to hear what wonderful thing you found."

"I," said Maurice, "found a boy who was thousands of miles from his home, without a cent in his pocket, or a railroad ticket or pass, without an umbrella, or a hand-bag, or luggage of any kind, all alone, travelling on a strange road and not knowing anyone he met or where he was going, and yet he was perfectly contented and happy."

"Was he an id-id-idiot?" said Babbity Ban.

"No," said Maurice, "I don't think anybody would call him an idiot."

"Was he asleep — somnambulist, you know?" said Wally Durney.

"No, he was wide awake."

"Was he going to seek his fortune?" said Fred.

"He never thought about any fortune," said Maurice.

"Was he a musician?" said Benny Whaples, who probably had heard and remembered the story of Goldsmith's maintaining himself by playing the flute when he wandered on the Continent.

"No, he couldn't even whistle 'Yankee Doodle.'"

"Was his name Maurice Smith?" said Sammy Whitney, at last.

"I believe it was," said Maurice.

Then we remembered he was born in England, had recently come to our country with his parents, and expected to go back.

Mrs. Dilloner said Maurice's discovery was not only pleasing but original, as it had occurred to him to turn his eyes inward instead of outward. She marked him *ten*.

Joe Lucas, the last explorer on Sammy's side, was then called.

"I found a very beautiful blue bowl," said Joe.

"What shade of blue?" asked Susie Berthrong.

"I should say sky blue," Joe replied.

"Why didn't you bring it?" said Dicky Barker.

"It was too large."

"Where was it?" said Fred Crawford.

"It was turned upside down on the ground."

"Was there anything under it?" said I.

"Yes, several things."

"What, for instance?"

"A yoke of oxen, for one thing."

"Pretty big bowl, and pretty strong one," said Wally Durney. "What was it made of?"

"I don't know," said Joe.

"What else was under it?"

"Well, there was a saw-mill."

"I've seen a toy saw-mill in a glass bottle," said Gouldburn Hinks.

"This was a real saw-mill," said Joe, "with five men at work in it, drawing in logs at one end and turning out boards at the other."

"How did you lift such a big bowl?" said Frank Bradfield.

"I didn't lift it, nor touch it."

"Then how could you see what was under it?"

"Because I was under it myself."

"What other things did you see there?"

"I saw a dog, and two robins, and a cherry-tree."

"I guess that is the big bowl," said Millicent Crawford, raising her hand toward the sky.

"Why, yes, of course," said everybody.

Mrs. Dilloner said she thought Joe's bowl was worth about *eight*.

"And now," she continued, "Millicent Crawford is the last. What did you find, my dear?"

"I found a four-leaved clover," said Millicent, "and there it is!" leaning forward and pointing down the table at me.

I once had a dreadful fever, and once I found my sister reading my diary, which I had carelessly left open; but never have my cheeks burned as on this occasion.

"Millicent appears to be the only one that actually found anything of value and brought it here," said Mrs. Dilloner. "I shall mark her *fifteen*."

Our side applauded heartily.

She then added up the credits, and announced that Sammy's company had won the general prize by a score of *sixty-nine* to *sixty-eight*.

The boys on the other side of the table immediately rose to their feet and gave three big cheers and a tiger.

As for our side, we didn't feel that we had been beaten very badly, and we said we were not very hungry for cake, anyway.

"The individual prize, for the prettiest find," said Mrs. Dilloner, "goes to the other side. I award it to Millicent Crawford."

Sammy Whitney at once proposed three cheers, in which we all joined heartily. I suppose the tiger was omitted because they were for a lady. Then everybody looked at Millicent, as if expecting her to make a speech.

"I thank you," said she, "but I don't think it is quite right. I think the blue bowl is the very prettiest of all ; and when I am grown up and sit at the end of the table, I shall give the ring to the boy that finds the blue bowl."

Joe Lucas blushed appropriately, and the great exploring contest was over.

The purchaser of the Iris was carried ashore in his arm-chair, the horses were brought out from their stable in the bow of the boat, where they had been eating their oats, and preparations were made for the return voyage.

While the girls were clearing away the table, the boys sat on the edge of the deck as before, enjoying the ride and good-naturedly discussing the score, which they criticised in every particular, each telling how he would have marked each one.

We had lingered at the lock longer than we realized, and the daylight faded into twilight before we got home. As we passed the Wide Water, the shadows of the tall plane-trees on its farther shore reached almost across to us, and their tops were bent and shaken by the ripples that ran along as outriders to the Iris. When we passed over the Deep Hollow, on the high embankments, the mournful voice of the whippoorwill came from the thicket that hid the murmuring stream far below us.

The organ-grinder, who had played at irregular intervals during the day, fell asleep beside his instrument at the bow. When Benny Whaples observed this, he

brought his accordion from the cabin, seated himself on the step that led to the steersman's platform, and played such tunes as "Auld Lang Syne," "Money Musk," "Star Spangled Banner," and "'Tis Midnight Hour." I thought then, and think now, that music, however rude and imperfect, always sounds well on the water.

We enjoyed Benny's playing until it was suddenly interrupted by the cry of "Low bridge!" and as we all ducked our heads we knew that we must be within a few rods of the boat-yard, where the Iris soon arrived. John Steele said "Whoa!" the steersman guided her over to the berme-bank, and the three bow hands sprang ashore and moored her. Then the gang-plank was thrown out, and the company filed across, Jammis & Towjer last of all, with his master's basket in his mouth, which was now filled with well-thumbed and ancient-looking sailing-charts, instead of refreshments. We went to our homes by the light of the early stars, with Gouldburn's water-compass to fall back upon in case the clouds obscured them.

CHAPTER XIV.

A COUNCIL OF FIVE.

WHEN I laid aside my jacket that night I was not willing to remove the emblem of good luck that Millicent had pinned to it, and I therefore hung it up carefully so that nothing should touch the clover. In fact, I wore it for two or three days, till it was wilted and shapeless. But when I contemplated going over to see Sammy and have a talk with him, it occurred to me that a delicate regard for his feelings perhaps required me to take it off. So I pinned it carefully to the leaf of my diary on which the voyage of the Iris was recorded, and closed the book.

I found Sammy sitting on his boulder, and I sat down beside him.

"Sammy," said I, "what would you like to do when you're a man? and what do you intend to do?"

"That's just what I was thinking about when you came through the gate," said Sammy, and then he was silent and whittled on a stick which he was cutting into fantastic knobs and notches, like an Alaskan totem-pole.

"Well?" said I, when he seemed likely to whittle away forever without speaking.

"Well," said he, "the fact is I would like to do one thing, but I shall probably do another and very different thing."

"Tell me first what you would like to do," said I—"oh, no! tell the other first, and save the best thing for the last."

"I suppose," said he, ceasing to whittle, striking one end of the stick into the ground, placing both hands on the other, and leaning heavily upon it, "that I shall be either a civil engineer or a lawyer, and shall work very hard at my profession a long time, and try to make some money."

"Then you are ambitious to be rich?" said I.

"Not at all," said he. "A very little money would buy all that I shall ever want."

"Then why will you work so hard to make it?"

"You know," said he, "my father has never been very well off, and now he begins to look worn out, as if he had hard work to carry on his business. So I think I ought to do something that will make me able to take care of him and mother by and by."

"But they say it is slow work getting up a law practice," said I, "and it takes a long time before you make any money, though when you're old and gray-headed you have more than you know what to do with."

"I'm afraid that's true," said Sammy, "and for that reason I shall probably be a civil engineer."

"And build railroads, and canals, and bridges, and water-works?" said I.

"Yes, that's it," said he.

"But, Sammy," said I, "have you considered what dangers you have to go through first?"

"What are they?" said he.

"Well, for one," said I, "there's snakes."

"What about snakes?" said he.

"Why," said I, "there's my cousin, Raphael Jameson. He went as chain-boy with a party of surveyors who were laying out a railroad route in Pennsylvania. And he told me the rattlesnakes were so thick, and bit so many of the men, that they had to have an extra boy with them, whose duty was only to carry a bottle of medicine for snake-bites. And after awhile they made that boy and Raph change places, because Raph could run faster than he could, and when they wanted the medicine they wanted it in an awful hurry. And then they called it that Raph was promoted."

"Do you know what the medicine was?" said Sammy, who didn't seem at all scared by the snake story.

"I asked Raph about that," said I, "and he told me he didn't know all the things, but there was a great deal of whiskey in it."

"I thought so," said Sammy.

"But really," said I, "I don't want to discourage you. It's a great profession—that is, for those who escape the

snakes and live to grow up in it. And then when you've done your work it's there, and you can be proud of it every time you look at it. I've heard my father say that if he had invented the locomotive he'd want to do nothing but sit on his door-step and see the cars go by all the rest of his life."

"Yes," said Sammy, "it is a great thing to carry a railroad through a wilderness and over a chain of mountains, or to harness up a river and make it work, by building a dam that the biggest flood can't break down. I know I should be proud of those things, if I should ever accomplish them. But that is not what I would most like to do."

"What would you choose?" said I.

"I would rather write a good poem about a river than build a dam across it," said Sammy. "And I would rather understand the effect that a railroad has on civilization, and be able to tell people about it in a way that they would remember, than build the railroad itself."

"Then you would rather be a writer, a professional author?" said I.

"Yes," said he, "that's it."

"That seems odd," said I, "for it is exactly the other way with me. I would delight most in building forts, with bomb-proofs and big guns, and ships to go round the world, and finding a way to bridge a river that everybody said couldn't be bridged, and inventing machines to

do big jobs like hammering a four-ton anchor out of one piece of iron. But I feel sure I shall never have a chance to do any of those things. I shall probably write gentle poems and harmless essays, and shall seem to myself all the time to be doing a girl's work in the world, instead of a man's."

"I don't think it's a girl's work," said Sammy, "to write *good* poems, and *good* essays, and stories that mean something. Do you ever think of Shakespeare and Scott and Washington Irving as being girls? You know the fable about the traveller and the north wind. For my part, the gentler a poem is the better I like it, and I wish I had nothing to do but write them." Then he opened his knife and began to whittle again.

"Do you write many?" said I.

"No," said he, "not many. I finish one only once in a great while. But I *think* a great many that I can't write. It is my favorite amusement."

"Do you suppose, Sammy," said I, "that if you should go through college, and learn ever so many languages, and study all the dictionaries, you would be able to write the poems that you only think now?"

"I doubt it," said he. "I don't believe it is for lack of words. It's something else. And, besides, I once asked father a question very much like that; and he said he never knew of a great linguist that was a great writer."

"I suppose," said I, "their brains get all clogged up

with words, so that they haven't enough room for ideas. You couldn't write much of a story on the edges of the leaves of 'Webster's Dictionary.' But if every other leaf was blank, you could write a long novel on them."

"Yes," said Sammy, "I'm afraid that's it."

"Then," said I, "the thing for us to do is to avoid learning too many languages, and just be careful about the fish."

"What fish?" said he wonderingly; and then I told him about my fish experiment when we were writing the prize stories.

Sammy laughed heartily.

"I'll never bother my head about fish," said he. "In fact, I never have any luck with fish, in the water or out. If I should fry two trout in three pans I should expect them to be three bullheads in one pan when I came to eat them."

I didn't care to talk any more about fish, for I felt that Sammy was not in sympathy with my scientific experiment. So I returned to the subject with which we began the conversation.

"Don't you think," said I, "that you can go ahead with your civil engineering, and use your evenings and other spare time to write your stories and poems?"

"I suppose I'll have to do it that way, if at all," said he. "And some good books have been written so."

"That's where you'll have the advantage of me," said

I. "For I can't make literature my business every day, and then build great forts and high bridges in the evenings and holidays."

Sammy said he hadn't thought of looking at it in that way before, and he appeared to be quite comforted.

"But," he added, seeking some encouragement for me, "you can make inventions in the evening."

"Y-e-s, little ones," said I, "such as you draw on paper or whittle out with a penknife. But for big smashers, that revolutionize civilization and make a noise, you have to try experiments, and build full-size models, and sometimes you have to have a shop in the woods and swear your workmen to secrecy. You can't do things like that unless you give your whole mind to it."

Before Sammy could reply to this, Babbity Ban came into the yard.

"Hello, Babbity!"

"Hello, boys! I s-s-suppose you're getting ready to write the complete and t-t-t-truthful history of the g-g-g-great exploring expedition?"

"No," said Sammy, "we hadn't thought of it. But wait till I get you a seat." Sammy looked about and could find nothing that would serve for a seat except a large wash-tub that was tilted up against the kitchen steps, which finally he brought and turned upside down near the boulder.

"It was a good expedition," said I.

"Yes, it was ek-ek-excellent as a picnic, and it was great fun; but what would the exploring have amounted to if S-s-s-sammy hadn't started us on the trick of f-f-f-finding things that didn't exist?"

"Yes, that was a good idea of Sammy's," said I, "and I was glad to see the boys fall in with it and follow it out so nicely. But, of course, we must give the main credit to Gouldburn."

"I d-d-don't know about that," said Babbity. "Why couldn't he just make a j-j-j-jolly picnic of it, and be satisfied? I believe he really thought he was going to find something won-won-wonderful. It seems to me he's always trying to k-k-k-kill two and a half birds with a st-st-stone and a half."

"At least, he is enterprising," said Sammy.

"Oh, yes," said Babbity, "he's en-en-enterprising enough, if that means g-g-g-going in for prizes. But how many does he c-c-come out with? that's the real question."

"I don't think it is," said Sammy. "I think the honor, when there is any, lies in going in for the prize—that all depends upon yourself; but whether you come out with the prize—that depends very much upon somebody else."

"It d-d-d Depends on the judges, I suppose."

"Not so much on them as on the others that go in for it," said Sammy. "If anybody goes in for a prize and

does his very best, he isn't entitled to any less credit because somebody else was able to do a little better."

"I don't believe the sk-sk-school-teachers look at it in that way," said Babbity. "They always seem to think the boy that gets the pup-pup-prize is the only boy worth m-m-mentioning, when perhaps he only did ha-ha-half a per cent. better than the next boy."

"I don't know how that is," said Sammy. "I don't care much about prizes, anyway. But I have great admiration for Gouldburn's pluck and the way he tries to make things go, though, of course, we all laugh a little at his mistakes now and then."

Sammy had hardly finished this sentence when Gouldburn himself came round the corner of the house, followed by Jammis & Towjer.

"Hello, Gouldburn!"

"Hello, boys!"

"What is the l-l-l-latest thing from France?" said Babbity, alluding to the fact, known to us all, that Gouldburn was studying a book called "French without a Master."

"Towt est bell, et lee oyson pender howt,* as they say in Paris," answered Gouldburn.

"I s-s-suppose that means," said Babbity, "that the last w-w-w-wild-goose chase was a s-s-success?"

* To know exactly what Gouldburn said, the reader must pronounce these words as they are spelled—that is, as if they were English.

"Yes," said Gouldburn, with a twinkle in his eye, "that's about what it does mean."

"I haven't been to Pup-pup-paris many times myself," said Babbity, "but I've no doubt they all talk j-j-j-just like that."

"What are you going to do next, to turn the world over?" said I, addressing Gouldburn.

"I've had my turn," said he, "and now I thought I'd ask what some of you have to offer?"

"I was just telling these fellows," said Babbity Ban, "that they ought to write the history of the g-g-g-great exploring expedition, if they're going to keep on as au-au-authors."

"But historians have to write the truth," said Sammy. "We're only story-tellers."

"Oh, well," said Babbity, "if you're too pup-pup-particular about the truth, I wouldn't write it at all. There wasn't a great deal of t-t-t-truth in it, anyway."

"No," said Gouldburn, "never mind the truth. Make it as much better than the truth as you know how."

"I thought nothing was better than the truth," said I.

"That's where you're mistaken," said Gouldburn, "for something is better than the truth."

"I should like to hear you prove it," said I.

"Well, what is the truth?" said he.

"Why—the truth," said I, "the truth is—the truth is things as they are."

"Very well," said he. "Then how about things as they might be? Couldn't that be better?"

"Sometimes people think so," said I, "but *might be* is good for nothing until it becomes *is*, and then it is the truth itself."

"I see," said he. "The last copy that I wrote in my copy-book was, *Truth lies at the bottom of a well*. And Dicky Barker reached over my shoulder and underscored the second word, and then the teacher gave *me* a demerit for it. That's what made me think so much about truth. I see that your bucket gets nearer the bottom of the well than mine. But here comes Fred Crawford."

"Hello, Fred!"

"Hello, boys! What's the subject of your town-meeting to-day?"

"Several subjects," said Sammy—"‘Truth,’ and ‘The Great Exploring Expedition,’ and ‘Prizes,’ and ‘What to Do for a Living.’"

"All very important," said Fred, "especially the last. I move that we go ahead with that subject."

"Sammy and I talked it over before Babbity and Gouldburn came," said I.

"Then," said Fred, "you must have been doing business without a quorum, as father says. You know he's a member of the Common Council. And so it counts for nothing. We'd better begin over again."

"Very well," said Sammy. "You speak first."

"I don't mind speaking first," said Fred. "In fact, it's the very subject I've been thinking about."

"What made you th-th-th-think about it?" said Babbity Ban.

"Several things," said Fred. "In the first place, I was looking over a life-insurance table that father brought home the other day, and studying out the chances of living till old age. Then I was walking up State Street and looking in at the stores and offices, and I began to think how those men did business and what it generally amounted to."

"How can you tell what it amounts to?" said I.

"Perhaps I can't tell exactly in dollars and cents," said Fred. "But there's one way in which I can tell. Did you ever look at the hair of those men?"

We all confessed that we had never noticed it.

"Well," continued Fred, "if you'll notice next time you go by, you'll see that in every one of those business places there is at least one man who is gray-headed. And in Hoyt's shoe-store I saw two gray-headed men, and there was another arranging the things in the show-window."

"What of that?" said Sammy.

"What of it?" said Fred. "Everything of it. What are those men doing?"

"Doing business," said Sammy.

"What for?" said Fred.

"I suppose to make a living, and perhaps to get rich," said Sammy.

"That's it," said Fred. "But when are they going to get rich and begin to live? Just think of it! I went with my little sister into one of those stores to buy a yard of calico. She wanted to make a new dress for her doll. And she wouldn't be satisfied with the first thing the clerk showed us; she wanted to see every kind there was on the shelves, and select the prettiest. At last she made a choice, and he cut off the yard and did it up nicely, and she paid for it and we came away. But I don't know how long it took him, after we left, to roll up the calicoes again and put them back into their places. She paid seven cents for it, and I suppose it cost them about six. And that man was gray-headed. When is he ever going to get rich on one cent at a time? Of course some people buy more than that; but then other people haul over the goods and don't buy anything at all, and some get trusted and never pay. And then the merchant has to pay his rent, and his gas bill, and a dollar a week to the boy that sweeps out the store, and something for wrapping-paper and string; and it takes an awful lot of pennies to do it all."

"But perhaps he isn't in a hurry to get rich," said I.

"If he isn't, he'd better be," said Fred. "Just think of it! most men don't live more than forty or fifty years, according to that insurance-table."

"F-f-f-fifty years is a long time," said Babbity. "It's half a c-c-c-century."

"Oh, yes," said Fred, "but think what they do with it. First you have to cut off from one end seventeen or eighteen years, when you're a boy, and have to go to school, and can't have much Fourth-of-July money, nor do what you please. Then you have to cut off from the other end all the years when you're old, and blind, and gray-headed, and rheumatic. And then out of the middle you have to take chunks and chunks, for the time that you're sick in bed, or going to church, or sitting on a corner's jury, or lying awake and thinking about the mortgage on your house. And what's left? I tell you, boys, I've thought it all over, and it seems to me that human life is like a cocoanut—an awful hard shell on the outside, and nothing on the inside, and between them a little thin strip that's good to eat."

"That may be so," said Sammy, "but what are we going to do about it?"

"The thing to do about it," said Fred, "is to get through the hard shell as soon as possible, and make the most of the eatable, before you come to the nothing."

"What about the m-m-m-milk in the cocoanut?" said Babbity.

"Oh, yes," said Fred, "sometimes there's a little milk there."

"Some people think the m-m-m-milk is the best part

of it," said Babbity; "and they don't b-b-believe you ever come to nothing."

"At any rate," said Fred, "they will all admit that the shell is hard, and some of them are all their lives getting through it."

"If you know where to pup-pup-pierce the shell," said Babbity, "you can get the m-m-m-milk the first thing."

"See here, Bab," said Fred, "I can't manage that illustration when you're around; you know too much about cocoanuts. We'll have to put the talk on some other basis."

"Never mind the co-co-cocoanut," said Babbity. "Go ahead and tell us what you're going to do with such a wor-wor-worthless thing as a human life."

"There's only one human life that I have charge of," said Fred, "and I don't know how worthless that is; but I'm going to try to make it worth something."

"How much do you think you can make it worth?" said Gouldburn.

"I'd like to make it worth a million dollars," said Fred; "but I'd rather have only half a million right away, than wait till I'm old, and blind, and palsied, and then have a whole million."

"Is that the v-v-v-very least you'll take?"

"It's the least I want," said Fred, "and I don't want it all in pennies, either. In the first place, it would take a whole lifetime to pile up a million dollars all in pennies,

one on top of another; and then it would take nearly another lifetime to climb to the top and get the first penny, to begin spending them."

"Are you sure you would ever get there at all?" said Sammy.

"Yes, of course, if I lived long enough. Why not?" said Fred.

"Because," said Sammy, "I have heard my father say that men who devote nearly their whole lives to getting money seldom know how to spend it, and they don't try until they are too old to learn."

"That's just it," said Fred; "that's what I want to avoid. I want to get the million dollars soon, and not use up my whole life at it."

"When you f-f-f-find out how, will you tell us?" said Babbity.

"Of course I will," said Fred, "but I thought we'd all find out together."

"Then you d-d-d-don't know yet?"

"Not quite. But I have some ideas."

"What are they?" said I.

"My most important idea," said Fred, "is that it depends on the number of people that come to your thing."

"What thing?"

"Whatever thing you have for business. I've got some figures on the subject." Here he drew a note-book from his pocket and opened it. "When I was walking

up State Street, I looked into ever so many places, and put down in this book the number of customers that I saw in them. I have also put down the number at three different kinds of show. I will read you the list: Jewelry store, 7; grocery, 6; butcher shop, 4; clothing store, 5; candy store, 5; drygoods store, 19; shoe store, 2; photograph gallery, 3 (but one of them was a baby); hardware store, 2; harness store, 1; spectacle store, 2; dye-house, 2; drug store, 3; tents and flags, 2; florist, 1; picture store, 1; book store, none at all; lecture, 300; minstrels, 850; circus, 2,000. There you have the statistics, and father says they are the foundation of all wisdom."

"Ac-k-k-cording to that," said Babbity, "the th-th-th-thing to go to is the circus, and the th-th-th-thing to keep away from is the b-b-b-book store. Isn't that b-b-b-bad moral teaching?"

"Perhaps so," said Fred. "But you must remember which side of the counter we're looking from."

"Are you sure that your statistics are all right?" Sammy inquired.

"Perfectly right. I counted twice every time, and put down the figures with great care."

"But suppose one customer in the jewelry store was buying a gold watch, and one in the candy store was buying a pop-corn ball. Don't you see there would be a great deal more profit on the watch than on the ball?"

"To be sure there would," said Fred. "But other

things balance that. The man that keeps the jewelry store has to wear a great deal better clothes than the woman that keeps the candy shop. And then suppose the man that buys a watch gives him a counterfeit hundred-dollar bill, and the boy that buys a corn-ball gives her a bad penny. And then the burglars come around once in a while, and if they get into a jewelry store, they carry off gold rings, and diamonds, and rubies, and sapphires, and all that sort of things. But if they got into a candy shop, what could they take? A pocketful of licorice drops, maybe, or a pound or two of taffy. So I guess it's about an even thing after all, and we come right back to the statistics."

"Then, as I understand it," said Gouldburn, "you would propose to have a circus."

"That's it," said Fred. "Have a first-rate circus—the littlest ponies, the spotteddest horses, plenty of golden chariots, and an awful witty clown. Everybody goes to the circus, and pays his money willingly."

"If he has it to pay," said I.

"As to that," said Fred, "you want to calculate a little. Suppose there is a part of the country where they mostly raise wheat, and they sell the wheat along late in July. You want to be on hand there with your circus early in August. And if there's a manufacturing town where they pay off the hands every Monday, you must exhibit in that town on Tuesday and Wednesday. That's the principle."

"That appears to be good business sense," said Gouldburn. "But how are we going to get our circus? It must cost a great deal of money."

"I've thought about that," said Fred. "We may have to begin with a side-show. Those side-shows pick up a very pretty lot of change."

"But even a good side-show would cost considerable," said I. "Suppose we had a polar bear, a giraffe, and a nine-legged colt. We'd have to buy tons and tons of ice for the bear to lie on; the colt would continually get his legs tangled up, so that one of us would be all the time running for the horse-doctor; and we'd have to buy a whole stack of hay every day, because the giraffe could only eat off the top."

"We wouldn't have any polar bear, nor any nine-legged colt, nor any giraffe," said Fred. "There are cheaper and better things than those?"

"What, for instance?"

"For instance, we might have a funny imitation of the big circus, which would make everybody laugh and feel good-natured. We must have some wooden horses on wheels, painted in spots, just like the circus-horses, and a crank to make them fly around the ring. We could manufacture them ourselves, and they wouldn't eat anything. Then we must have a good clown, who says wittier things, and more of them, and cracks his whip louder than the real clown. That pleases the people, and the first thing

we know we shall have money enough to set up a full-sized circus."

"Yes, I think we can make the wooden horses, and paint them," said Gouldburn. "If you say so, I'll draw the plans for them this evening. But where are we going to get the clown?"

"I thought I'd be clown the first year," said Fred. "And after I get the business well started, some of you can learn the jokes and take my place for a term, while I go into the office and sell the tickets."

"Where are you going to get the w-w-w-witty things to say?" asked Babbity Ban.

"I have the 'Book of Blunders' at home," said Fred, "and I can pick out forty or fifty of the funniest things in that. And then I thought I'd get these prize authors to make me a few more."

"Oh, yes," said I, "we can write plenty of them; but where do our profits come in?"

"I'll tell you how to make profit on a book," Fred replied. "Don't write any history of Greenland, or any essay on the gratitude of nations, or any poem on the other side of the moon. Run a circus for fifteen or twenty years, and then write your own life, and have it sold in the cars and on the fair-grounds. It will be full of adventures, and that is what the people appreciate."

"That's all very satisfactory," said Sammy, with a twinkle in his eye that Fred did not see. "But

how long is it going to take you to get your million dollars?"

"I've figured it all out," answered Fred, opening his note-book again. "We ought to have a tent that will hold three thousand people. Some days we can give two performances, and some only one, and some none at all, because we are travelling from one town to another. But I think we can give about three hundred in a year. Reckon that up, at a quarter of a dollar apiece, and you get two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. Call the twenty-five thousand expenses, and you have two hundred thousand left. Keep that up for five years, and there's your million dollars."

"That's g-g-g-good as far as it goes," said Babbity. "But there are five of us, and we each want a m-m-m-million. That's twenty-five years, and by that time we shall all be c-c-c-centenarians, or something of that sort."

Fred seemed at a loss to reply to this, looked again at the figures in his note-book, said he must find a way to reduce expenses, and then tried to change the subject.

"I thought we were all going to tell about our plans for life," said he; "but you haven't discussed any but mine."

"I'm afraid ours would seem very tame after yours," said Sammy.

"Yes," said Babbity, "Fred's is w-w-w-wild enough."

"I can't talk about mine till I have the illustrations ready," said Gouldburn; "I'm drawing them now."

"What are you going to do with your million dollars when you get them?" said Sammy.

"Why, I'm—I'm—going to enjoy them, of course," said Fred.

"Did you ever enjoy a pie?" said Sammy.

"Yes, certainly," said Fred. "That is, a piece of pie—not a whole pie, oh, no!"

"Don't you think enjoying a million dollars would be like enjoying a whole pie?" said Sammy.

"It's like e-e-eating a corner and s-s-s-sitting down on the rest," said Babbity.

At this instant there was a fizz, a rush, and a scratching sound, as Mrs. Whitney's white cat ran up the plum-tree and Jammis & Towjer tried to retrieve him, which broke up the council.

"Don't you think, Sammy," said I, when the other boys were gone, "that we ought to tell Gouldburn about the danger of learning too many languages? You know he has some idea of being an artist and writer."

"Perhaps we ought," said he.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BOY THAT BROKE IN TWO.

“Sammy,” said I, as we sat together — not on his boulder this time, but on a shelf of rock that projected over one of the clear, cool, still places in our river, where we could see the fishes going quietly about the business of their little settlement directly beneath us, and the heavy liquid braids in the central channel, and the lessening ripples between it and the farther shore, and the long slope of wooded bank with occasional ledges on which the adventurous columbine had gained a narrow foothold, while a canopy of green branches overhung us, moved by a breeze that came from the distant lake and followed up the windings of the great gorge—“Sammy,” said I, “you are able to write *some* of the poems that you think, are you not?”

“I am not able to write a single one of them as well as I think it,” said he; “but I write some of them after a fashion, and if they are not too bad I lay them away in hopes of improving them some day. Most of them seem so poor that I burn them and think no more about them.”

I observed the point of a long lead pencil projecting

from one of his pockets, and the bulge of another pocket seemed to indicate that it contained a small note-book. This gave me an idea, and presently I said, "Sammy, have you a poem in mind now?"

"Yes," said he, "I was thinking of one."

"Then," said I, "I shall go away, and give you a chance to write it."

"No, don't go," said he. "I would rather sit here with you, looking at the water and the woods and the sky, and talking over our plans, than write any poem. For this landscape seems perfect to me, and no poem that I can make ever will be."

"Yes," said I, "that may be all true; but we can come here together a great many times, and there will be many days like this; while the poem that is in your mind, if you don't write it, may pass away forever into nothingness, like the pretty ripple made by the fish that jumped out of the water just now. Isn't it so?"

"Yes," said he, slowly, "I think it is."

"And, besides," said I, "this sunshine and all the beautiful lights and shadows that it makes will soon pass away, whether I stay here or not; but if you once get the poem on paper, it will remain forever. I am going, and when I think you've had time to write it, I'll come back."

I climbed up the steep path through the young beech and chestnut trees, reached the top of the great bank, and wandered off aimlessly in the down-stream direction.

There was a bit of leafy forest, with a foot-path that followed the edge of the bluff and gave, through the underbrush, frequent glimpses of the river; then a corner of a cultivated field; then a dilapidated low stone wall, surmounted by the remnants of a rail fence. While I was clambering over this, a slight rustling noise at its foot attracted my attention, and I saw a bright-green snake gliding away through the grass and leaves. With the usual human impulse, I sprang instantly from the top of the wall and came down upon the snake so that my heel crushed the life out of it. The life, but apparently not all the animation. I stood for several minutes looking at the phenomenon—always strange and fascinating to a boy—of an animal that was known to be dead moving as if it were alive. The boys used to say, on such occasions, that “the tail couldn’t die till sunset.”

I suppose, if I had had company, I should have done no more than take a single curious look at the little victim, and then walked on and thought no more about it. But I was alone, and in a mood to be in sympathy with every living thing, and before I knew it I had divided myself into two persons, who entered upon a dialogue with each other.

“Now, why did you do that?” said one of me.

“Because he was a snake,” said the other of me.

“What if he was?” said one of me.

“Everybody kills snakes,” answered the other of me.

"But you knew that this one was a harmless kind of snake."

"I suppose I did, but I didn't think about that. A snake just looks like a snake to me, and I hate to see them crawling."

"Perhaps he hated to see you walking, but he was getting out of your sight as fast as he could."

"But does not the Bible say," said the other of me, "that whenever a man sees a snake he must step on it and squash its head?"

"Not exactly," said one of me.

"Well, bruise its head, then," said the other of me.

"Yes, it says he will bruise its head—which wouldn't necessarily kill it," answered one of me.

"Just so," said the other of me.

"But it also says," continued one of me, "that the serpent will bruise his heel."

"Yes, now I remember the verse, that's exactly what it does say."

"But you put on heavy boots, so that the little snake can't bruise your heel, and then you go right on bruising its head worse than ever."

"That does seem unfair," said the other of me.

"Yes, you see that if you say the Bible commands you to bruise his head, you have to say that the same Bible commands him to bruise your heel."

"But perhaps it isn't a command at all," said the

other of me, "and only tells what will happen, not what must or ought to happen."

"Perhaps so," said one of me.

"And then, too," said the other of me, "if I take off my boots to give the little, harmless snake a fair chance, I ought to take them off to give the same chance to a big poison-snake; for the Bible doesn't speak of different kinds, it only says 'the serpent.'"

"That seems reasonable in words, but wrong in action," said one of me.

"It may be," said the other of me, "that I'd better keep on my boots and bruise the heads of the poison-serpents, but let the harmless ones alone."

"That sounds like the right answer," said one of me.

And then I walked on through the woods, whistled my favorite tune, picked some wintergreen berries, broke off a small branch of fragrant birch, and never dreamed that I had been discussing the great principle of chivalry, which has confused the military logic of the world for centuries. A long, grassy slope, passing under a leafy arcade, led me down almost to the level of the water. At a point here where the bank was not more than three yards high, and had been under-cut by the stream, a tree, half green and half dead, hung out at a low angle over the river. On the extreme tip of the dead top sat a beautiful blue-winged bird. In a single second after I first saw it, I found myself creeping noiselessly down to the pebbly shore and

choosing a stone. I was rather proud of my skill in throwing at long distances ; but after the stone had left my hand, while my eye was fixed intently on the bird, and I saw more clearly than before the beauty of its plumage, I hoped I should miss it. The bird saw the murderous thing coming, and spread his wings just in time to bring one of them into its path. The next instant the bird flew away ; but a shining blue feather, cut from his wing, circled slowly downward until it rested on the water and was borne away on the stream. I stood and watched it as long as it was in sight.

When the bird had disappeared in the sky, and the feather floated round a curve in the river, I suddenly broke in two again.

“Do you think,” said one of me, “that a dead branch of a tree looks prettier without a bird on it ?”

“No,” said the other of me, “I do not, and I wish the bird would come back.”

“But if he came back,” said one of me, “do you think he would be more beautiful with a feather missing from one of his wings ?”

“No,” said the other of me, “of course he would not.”

“But perhaps you believe,” said one of me, “that the stream is improved by feathers floating on it ?”

“No,” said the other of me, “it is not ; for they make it suggest strife and sorrow and death, instead of peace and quietness.”

"Then you must be sorry you threw the stone," said one of me.

"I don't know about that," said the other of me. "Everybody throws and shoots at birds."

"But a true sportsman," said one of me, "shoots only at game—at birds that are good to eat. He would be ashamed to kill sparrows and robins and blue-birds."

"Very true," answered the other of me, "but most of the sportsmen that I know could buy as many birds as they want to eat, cheaper than they can get guns and ammunition, and take time from their business to go out and shoot them."

"That is probably so," said one of me; "but what does it prove?"

"I think it proves," replied the other of me, "that they really shoot them for the fun of firing the gun and killing the bird; and if it is just as much fun to me to knock a bird from a bush with a stone, I don't see how they can say that I am wicked and they are not."

"But they call the use of the shot-gun an athletic exercise, a manly pastime," said one of me, "and I never heard them call throwing stones by any such name."

"Yes," said the other of me, with a sarcastic drawl, "I should think it would be a manly sport to draw on a big pair of boots, and sling a heavy shot-pouch from the shoulder, with a game-basket on the other side, and take an eight-pound gun, and call two or three dogs, and tramp

off through the woods and swamps to get a chance to murder some little bird. All those artificial preparations are a fine thing for a manly man ; they make him look brave, and when he gets home he ought to brag how many birds he killed or wounded that the dogs couldn't get, besides those in the basket. But a boy that obeys a natural impulse to throw a stone, ought to be punished severely for it."

Then I strolled along the flat or intervale, following the line where the grassy edge of the meadow met the sandy beach that was overflowed when the stream was in spring flood. I came to the mouth of a pretty brook, and crossed it on a bridge that was made of a single log, strolled a long distance farther down stream, and then found a flat-bottomed, home-made boat, which was moored to the root of a great tree.

This seemed a good place to rest and meditate, and I took a seat in the boat. I soon fell to thinking about Sammy and his poem, and wondering what its subject would be, and whether it was possible that he could be so lost in his inspiration as to fall off from the high shelf of rock on which he was sitting. By and by the course of these thoughts was interrupted by the discovery that I was afloat in mid stream, where the river was quite broad and the current very gentle.

I looked for the means of getting ashore, and found one broken oar in the bottom of the boat, which would be suffi-

cient for a paddle. I also found a fish-line and a small box of bait. The latter had apparently been left there since the day before, but the worms were still lively.

The next minute I baited the hook and cast it overboard ; and after a few illusory nibbles a small black bass was brought up out of the water, unfastened, and thrown upon the bottom of the boat.

While I was re-baiting the hook, my eye met his. It was a large, beautiful eye, and he could not close it in the bright sun. It looked so pathetic as he lay there gasping, that I broke in two a third time.

"Why did you catch that fish?" said one of me.

"Because that's what hooks and lines are for," said the other of me.

"But you know," said one of me, "that when a sportsman shoots a bird or a squirrel, if it is not killed by the shot, he takes pains to kill it before putting it into his bag. Why do you let that fish lie there and die slowly?"

"Why," answered the other of me, "I suppose it's because — because there's no convenient way to kill it."

"Or because it has no voice to complain," suggested one of me, "and so you don't think about its suffering?"

"Perhaps so," said the other of me.

"Then why don't you either kill it or throw it back into the water?" asked one of me.

I picked up the fish, took another look at its beautiful eye, stroked its side, thinking of the good brain-material

under those shining scales, and then quietly slipped it into the river.

I paddled toward the shore, and up stream far enough to restore the boat to its mooring, fastened it more securely than it was before, and, walking slowly across the intervale, made a long detour through the fields and woods, so as not to get back to Sammy before he had ample time to finish his poem.

The path that led to the little rocky shelf I descended noiselessly, and soon got near enough to look down over his shoulder and see that his task was not done. There were a good many lines on the paper, and quite a number had been scratched out, and now he had evidently stopped to think of a word or a rhyme. I sat down softly under a young birch-tree, and waited.

CHAPTER XVI.

RHYME AND TIME.

I waited a long time, and was very much interested in observing Sammy's method of writing. Sometimes he wrote half a dozen lines without stopping, as if he were only putting down something that he remembered. Again, he wrote a portion of a line, and then stopped, hesitated over it, and perhaps scratched it out and re-wrote it before writing the remainder of the line. Several times he turned back and changed lines near the beginning, which he had written long before and which I supposed were finished and satisfactory. Twice he skipped a space on the paper and wrote the last two lines of the stanza before he had written the lines that were to precede them ; and once I observed that he put down the two rhyming words first, and then, after some thought, filled in the lines behind them. It hurt me a little to see him do this, for it looked somewhat artificial. I knew that when I wrote poetry myself I often had to resort to that device ; but I considered Sammy a truly inspired poet, whose rhymes ought to follow the sense, instead of determining it.

Once he laid the book on the grass beside him, and

rested his hand on it, and then seemed to forget all about it. He was looking into the river far below him, and I, looking over his head, could see it also. The reflections of the cumulus clouds were deep in the clear water, moving very slowly across the bed of the stream. And when a fresh breeze sprang up, it was quite as entertaining to watch their shadows chasing one another across the curving, green slope of the opposite bank.

At last Sammy appeared to finish his work, read it all over, changed a word or two, put the book into his pocket, and then picked up a small flat stone and threw it far out into the gorge. Like him, I watched the scaling stone as it made its reluctant, zig-zag way to the water, and then I scrambled down to him.

"Is it done, Sammy?" said I, as soon as I got my breath. "And is it a good one?"

"Yes, it's done," he answered, slowly, "but I don't know about its being very good."

"Why don't you think it's good?" said I.

"Because," said he, "it seems so hard sometimes to make words say exactly what you want them to say."

"Do you think it's because there are too many words in the world, or too few?" said I.

"I used to think," said he, "it was because there were not enough, but now I am inclined to think it is because there are too many."

"Do you think too many really?" said I, "or only too many for boys like us to manage?"

"I guess they are too many for us," said he. "The great poets never seem to have any trouble about managing them."

"Wouldn't it be nice if there were no ready-made words at all," said I, "and every writer could make them as he wanted them? Then there would be no trouble about the rhymes."

Sammy laughed, and I immediately saw the foolishness of my remark.

"Did you ever try to make an entirely new word?" said he.

"No," said I, "but of course it's easy enough."

"Of course it isn't easy enough," said he. "Just try it once."

I remained perfectly silent for five minutes, trying to frame a new word. Then I said:

"I can't do it. It's too late in the day. If I had been Adam, I could have made plenty of them, and I think I would have made some of them sound a great deal better than they sound now. But after he and Saint Paul and Shakespeare and Barnes's Notes have got through, there are no words left for anybody else to make. I tell you, Sammy, there are too many words in the world already. We ought to get some of them repealed."

Sammy laughed again, and so I changed the subject.

"Won't you read me your poem?" said I.

"I don't mind, if you care to hear it," he replied.

So we sat down again under the little trees that clung to the thin soil of the rocky ledge, and he read his verses to me, in his low, musical voice.

Over the water and under the sky,
Dreamily sailing, the clouds go by.
Fleecy and white as a wild swan's breast,
Darkened and dim as the mountain's crest,
Reddened with flashes of sunset fire,
Rolled into portents and effigies dire,
Smiling or frowning for calm or for storm,—
Whatever the color, whatever the form,
Daily and nightly the clouds go by,
Over the water and under the sky.

Over the water and under the sky,
Steadily sailing, the ships go by.
Sailing away on the arctic breeze,
Floating along to the tropic seas,
Beating about at the stormy cape,
Cleaving the fog like a ghostly shape,
Carrying cargoes for peaceful trade,
Bristling with guns for destruction made,
Sailing forever, the ships go by,
Over the water and under the sky.

Over the earth and under the sky,
The great procession of life goes by.
Some in laughter and some in tears,
Leaping in childhood or crippled in years,

Toiling along under wearisome load,
 Galloping off on a flowery road,
 Hopeful and hopeless, the small and the great,
 The captive in chains and the monarch in state,—
 All in the endless procession go by,
 Over the landscape and under the sky.

Over the landscape and under the sky,
 Dreamily roving, our souls go by.
 Seeking the wonders of every clime,
 Reading the tales of a far-away time,
 Marching where thousands keep step to the drum,
 Brooding in solitude sightless and dumb,
 Taking the world at the worst or the best,
 Willing to labor and careless of rest,—
 If eternity finds us, when life's gone by,
 Under the daisies and over the sky.

“Sammy,” said I, when he had finished the reading and I had thought it over a minute or two, “is that a religious poem?”

“Why—no,” said he, “I didn’t think about making it religious.”

“But it believes in heaven—says so in the last line—doesn’t it?” said I.

“Yes, it believes in heaven,” said he.

“Well, Sammy,” said I, “that’s a real good poem, ten times as good as any that I could write, and yet there’s something about it that I don’t exactly like.”

“What is that?” said Sammy.

"The thing I don't like," said I, "is, that it speaks too disrespectfully of human life."

"How so?" said he.

"Because," said I, "it talks as if the whole thing amounted to just about nothing. And I've noticed that's the way with nearly all the poets. They seem to think there's nothing to do but rush through with everything in this world, like a railroad restaurant, and get into the other as soon as possible."

"Yes," said Sammy, "that's the way that many of them write."

"If they can't do anything with time," said I, "how do they expect to manage eternity?"

"Still," said Sammy, "you know that human life is very short."

"I don't know any such thing," said I. "There's a way to make it seem short, and a way to realize how very long it is."

"How do you do that?" said he.

"Take an illustration," said I. "Is the Bible long, or short?"

"I should say it's a very long book," said Sammy, after thinking a minute.

"Just so," said I. "If you think over all the stories that are in it, and all the commandments, and all the genealogies, and all the gospels, and all the epistles, and all the verses that we've tried to learn, a few at a time, for

Sunday-school, it seems as if there could be no end to it. But if you just shut it up, and hold it out and say, 'There's the Old Testament and the New Testament,' it makes it seem very short."

"How does that illustrate life?" said Sammy.

"In this way," said I. "If we merely say, 'So many years ago I was born, and in so many years more I shall go into business, and in so many years after that I shall retire and be an old man, and in a few more I shall die,' it makes the whole thing seem like next to nothing."

"Yes, it does," said Sammy.

"But I look at it another way," said I. "I think of something that happened three years ago, and then I run over in my mind everything I can think of that has happened since — the different teachers we've had, the new studies we've taken up, the things I got at the three Christmases, the new and larger clothes that have been made for me, the shooting-stars that I kept count of (when it got to forty-three I forgot to count any more), how my pear-trees have grown, what a little puppy Grigwire's Rex was three years ago, how bad I felt when I lost my pink and green kite, and how I laugh about it now, how much better hand I can write, how I used to play with Charlie Burch, and how the roses have grown on his grave, how many of the big boys have left school and gone to work, how much interest there is on the money that I put into the Sixpenny Savings Bank, and how two thorn-apple

bushes and an elm-tree used to seem like a forest to me—when I think of all those things, it makes three years seem like an awful long time. Then I think how old my grandfathers were when they died, and how old my grandmothers are now; and I subtract my life from theirs, and divide by three years, and the answer is about twenty. Twenty times as much as all that I've been thinking of! I tell you it makes life seem long enough and worth-while enough for anybody."

"I never thought of looking at it in that way," said Sammy; "and yet that may be the right way. But I suppose the people who have gone through life ought to know best about it, and old people generally say it is very short."

"Oh, yes," said I, "they all talk about spending their years as a tale that is told, and a tale that has been told *is* short. But a tale that isn't told yet may be very long. Don't you suppose twenty years seems longer than Methuselah's life to a burglar, when he gets that sentence to State prison?"

"No doubt it does," said Sammy.

"The long and short of it is," said I, "that we ought to look at things from the end where we belong, and not from the end that belongs to somebody else."

"Then you think," said Sammy, "that my poem looks at life from the wrong end?"

"No, I wouldn't exactly say that," said I, "for I like the poem; I wish I could write one-half as good. But I

do think that young people and poets ought to take a cheerful view of life. If they don't, who will?"

"I did not intend this poem to be sad," said he.

"No, I suppose not," said I. "And yet it represents everything as going by, and nothing as ever coming back. It makes the greatest and most beautiful things in life seem like the end of a rainbow, which you can admire from a distance but can never put your hand upon. But I can't wonder at it, for nearly all the good poetry that I've read is sad."

"I believe that is so," said Sammy, "and I don't understand it, for it isn't true of pictures or music or any other art, is it? Now that you speak of it, it seems to me that old people ought to be cheerful too, for they have had their life and are sure of it, while the young people don't know whether they will have theirs at all."

"Then, as we figure it out," said I, "everybody ought to be cheerful all his life?"

"That's the way it looks," said Sammy.

"And there ought to be no chance for any poet but a comic poet," said I.

"A comic poet is no poet at all," said Sammy.

"But he may be a fun-maker, a cheerer-up of gloomy people," said I.

"Y-e-s," said Sammy, very slowly, "I suppose so; though the few gloomy people that I know seem to be gloomy because it pleases them to be gloomy."

Then he opened his note-book and proceeded to tear out the leaves containing the poem that he had just written.

“What are you doing, Sammy?” said I.

“I’m going to destroy this poem,” said he, “and never write another one unless I can make it cheerful from beginning to end.”

“Don’t destroy it,” said I, laying my hand on his arm. “Give it to me.”

“Yes, if you’ll keep it to yourself,” said he, handing me the crumpled leaves.

I smoothed them out carefully, folded them neatly, and put them into my pocket. And I have kept them to this day.

CHAPTER XVII.

CASPAR KEAL.

ABOUT a year later Sammy and I sat, one day, on the boulder and held a serious consultation. It was, perhaps, more serious on his part than on mine.

"I must do it," said he. "I feel sure my father is getting into difficulty in his money matters, and I must help him if I can."

"But don't you think," said I, "that if you remained in school, and went through college, and got more education, you could help him a great deal better? You know the motto over the blackboard says 'Knowledge is power.'"

"Yes," said Sammy, "there's no doubt that knowledge is power; but I've learned, in studying natural philosophy, that power is of no use unless it hits something. What's the power of the wind until it strikes the sails of a vessel? What's the power of a stream until it comes to a water-wheel? What's the power of a boy's leg unless there's a foot-ball for him to kick? If I should wait to go through college, and get a great deal of the power of knowledge, by that time there might be nothing for me to exercise it on that would benefit father."

"Do you think you could help him two or three years now, and go to college afterward?" said I.

"Possibly," said Sammy, "but I should not have much hope of that."

"Then you'll really go into business right away?"

"I really will, if I can get a chance."

"And how do you expect to get the chance?"

"There's only one way—by going out and looking for it," said he. "I can't sit here on this boulder and have it come to me."

"Of course not," said I. "And if it did come, it might not be the chance you'd rather have. It would be like sitting here and eating whatever plums happened to fall from this tree—most of which would probably be wormy—instead of climbing up and picking the best ones."

"It's more than that," said Sammy. "It's a question of either climbing for the plums or getting none at all."

"When shall you go to look for the chance?"

"As soon as possible."

"And would you like to have anyone go with you?" said I, hesitatingly, "or would you rather go alone?"

"I would be glad to have you go with me," said he.

"I should be glad to," said I. "And who knows but we might find something that both of us could go into, and grow up together, and make a big business of it, like — like ——"

I was going to say, like Saul and Jonathan, but I re-

membered in time that theirs was not exactly a business partnership; then I was about to say, like Damon and Pythias, but I remembered that they also were bound together in no commercial way; then I thought of mentioning two well-known men who had become enormously rich in a few years, but their methods were considered dishonest and disgraceful. So I ended with:

“In fact, there is nothing exactly like it in history.”

Sammy laughed, and said he thought not.

“And if we don’t find anything that we can go into together,” I continued, “I can go with you one day, and you can go with me another, till we both find what we would like next best.”

Sammy assented to this, and we agreed that we would set out at once on the search, as a school vacation had just begun.

“What do you think you would like best?” said I.

“I’ve thought it all over,” said Sammy, “and it seems to me it would be best to go to Caspar Keal first, because his mill and the things that belong to it come nearest of anything in this town to furnishing the kind of work that I want to learn for a life business.”

Caspar Keal was the owner and manager of a small paper-mill, which was picturesquely situated farther down stream than the flouring-mills and machine-shops. It was the only mill in town that had its water-wheel arranged in the old-fashioned way — on the outside of the building

When any of the boys or girls attempted sketching, Caspar Keal's paper-mill — with its plashing water-wheel, its projecting gable for the great tackle, its yellow siding and white corner-boards, its little quadrant attic windows, the immense butternut-tree overshadowing one corner, and Caspar himself leaning on the half door and smoking his pipe — was generally the first thing they tried to picture.

"I never knew that you wanted to learn paper-making, Sammy," said I.

"It is not paper-making alone," said he; "but the mill has its own dam, and when it has to be repaired or rebuilt, that is so much engineering work. And then there's the machinery. And the mill itself is very old, and I should think a new one would have to be built in its place before many years. Altogether, it seems like a pretty good chance to work into what I want."

I thought Sammy must have a remarkably good head for business, to have thought it all out so clearly, and without further discussion we walked down to the paper-mill. We found Caspar in his little office reading a newspaper, which he laid down when we entered. He was German by birth, and though he had come to our country when quite young, he still retained something of his German accent and manner of speech.

"Well, my boys, what can I do for you?" said he, after we had taken off our caps and saluted him.

"I came to talk with you about work," said Sammy.

"That was good," said Caspar; "most boys rather talk about play than work. What kind of work?"

"The kind that you do here — all kinds that you do here," said Sammy.

"Oh, you want to be apprentice to the business?"

"I suppose that would be it," Sammy answered, with some hesitation, as he probably had the reluctance that all boys feel to being "bound apprentice."

"I'm afraid I should have to talk with your father first about that," said Caspar. "Who is he?"

Sammy told him his father's name and business.

"And what is your name?" said Caspar.

"Samuel H. Whitney."

A very singular expression came over Caspar's face when Sammy mentioned his name. He brought his lips tightly together, drummed on his desk with his fingers, and was silent for two or three minutes. Then he said:

"Well, boys, let's go through the mill, and see how you like it."

We followed him out of the office, and he led us first upstairs to a room where half a dozen old women were sorting piles of rags. In those days paper was made from cotton and linen rags; in these days it is made from wood.

"This is the sorting-room," said Caspar; "take particular notice of it. All the rags are carefully looked over here; these women handle every scrap before it goes to the cutter."

"Why is that?" said I.

"In the first place," said Caspar, "the white rags have to be separated from the colored ones."

"Do you make the colored paper of colored rags?" said Sammy.

"Oh, no," said he, "we take out the color with chemicals, and make them all white to begin with. If we want colored paper, we put in the coloring matter after they are reduced to pulp."

"These women seem to be doing more than sorting them by colors," said I.

"Yes," said Caspar, "there are many things to be done. Some peoples throw their old dresses into the rag-bag, and then we have to take out the whalebones and cut off the hooks and eyes. We find a good many old shirts, and of course we take off the buttons. Sometimes a shopkeeper throws in his old awning, and then we must take out the brass eyelets and cut off the rope that binds the edge. The other day they found a boy's marble-bag, with a dozen marbles in it. And sometimes they find boys' kites, and have to take out the wooden sticks. There are many old books, and all the covers must be taken off."

"And I suppose you find money sometimes?" said I.

"Once in a great while, but not often," said Caspar. "I let these women keep all the money they find; it makes them more careful."

"Any old letters?" said I.

"Thousands of them," said Caspar.

"And do these women read them all?" said Sammy.

"Not quite," said Caspar, laughing. "But sometimes when I come in I find them reading the letters. Those are nothing, though, to the poetry. A woman can't get by a piece of poetry without reading it. Remember what I tell you, young man, a woman always reads poetry."

"And do you get much poetry to be ground up in your mill and made into white paper?" said I.

"Not much good poetry," said Caspar, "not much Shakespeares and Schillers; but lots of bad, awful bad, what you call — catterel?"

"I guess you mean doggerel," said Sammy.

"Doggerel is it?" said Caspar. "Well, catterel or doggerel, it's all the same, young man. I tells you it's bad — beware of it."

Sammy said he would beware of it; and I said I'd beware of it also, though the next instant it occurred to me that the invitation to Sammy to beware of doggerel had not been extended to me. One can't be too careful to be sure that he is invited, before he accepts — or declines, either.

We went next into a room where a big machine was making a terrific noise with revolving knives that were cutting the rags to shreds inside of a cylinder. Then we saw where the rags were cleaned and where they were

boiled and bleached and made into pulp; and at last we saw the long machine, with almost endless sets of rollers and cylinders, where the pulp went in at one end and came out paper at the other and was cut into sheets by a revolving knife.

Caspar asked Sammy a good many questions about the machines, to see whether he understood such mechanism; and Sammy, after looking at the machinery, was generally able to answer correctly. After a time he pointed out the window and said :

“Do you know what that is, young man?”

“That is the dam across the river,” Sammy answered.

“Yes,” said Caspar, “that is the dam; and sometimes when it breaks we must know how to mend it.”

“That would please me,” said Sammy.

“Please you!” said Caspar.

“I don’t mean it would please me to have the dam break,” Sammy explained; “but when it did break I should be pleased to mend it. That is the very kind of work that I want to do.”

“Uh!” said Caspar. “If you built a dam, young man, which way would you make him curve, up stream or down stream?”

This was the first question that had really caught Sammy. He took a minute to think, but could not imagine any reason why a dam should curve either way. Then he said :

"I would make it curve either up stream or down stream, as the owner wanted it."

Caspar laughed loud and long.

"That won't do, young man," he said. "You must make him curve up stream. Well, you will know more when you learn something."

Then he opened a small outside door where there was roaring of water and rush of spray, and said :

"Do you know what that is?"

"Yes, sir," said Sammy, "that's the water-wheel."

"Just so, young man, just so! Whose water-wheel?"

"I suppose it is yours," said Sammy.

"You *suppose*? Ah, I thought you *knew* it was mine, knew it was Caspar Keal's water-wheel. Well, that is what it is, young man. Take a good look at it; you might want to describe it some day—describe it in good prose, not in bad cat—I mean doggerel."

"Certainly, sir," said Sammy. "It is well worth describing. It is very picturesque."

"Ah, I am glad you think so. It is a good wheel, no matter if it is a little old-fashioned. I suppose it suits the water; you know water is very old-fashioned," and Caspar laughed loudly at his own joke. "Which do you think was built first, the mill or the wheel?"

"The mill, of course," said Sammy.

"Ah, I am glad you know. Some peoples think the wheel grewed first and the mill was built afterward."

“Do you think you will want a boy to learn the business?” said Sammy, as Caspar was showing us out of the mill without saying anything on the main question.

“Ah, as to that,” said Caspar, “I cannot tell. Some day when you don’t see the water-wheel going round you just come in and ask me.”

This was rather unsatisfactory, not to say embarrassing; but nothing was left for us but to bid him good-day as politely as we could, and depart.

After we had walked some distance in silence (for I felt that it was Sammy’s disappointment rather than mine, and I did not wish to begin the talk about it), he sat down on the steps of a deserted house that had the reputation of being haunted, put his head between his hands, and appeared to be trying very hard to think. Then suddenly he burst into laughter.

“What is it, Sammy?” said I.

“A light has broken upon me,” said he, “as the burglar said when the watchman struck him over the head with his lantern.”

“Do you mean to say you know what made Caspar Keal talk and act so strangely?”

“I think I do.”

“What was it?”

“It must have been a poem of mine. For now I remember that a long time ago I wrote a poem called

‘Caspar Keal and his Water-wheel.’ There was one blank page left in my copy-book, and I wrote it on that. And I remember that afterward when I looked for it and inquired about it, mother said she believed that book was thrown into the rag-bag, and a man had called and got the rags a week ago. So I thought no more about it. But those women must have found it and shown it to Caspar.”

“And it had your name on it?”

“My name was on the book, of course.”

“How did you happen to write it, Sammy?”

“I was passing by the mill one day, and I noticed that the machinery was stopped. The water was shut off, and Caspar, with a hammer in his hand, was crawling into the wheel, probably to repair it in some way. As I looked at him, the first line of the poem came to my mind, and then it kept running in my head until it seemed the only way to get it out was to write the remainder. I scratched it down in the old book, and thought no more about it for a long time; and then when I looked for it, as I tell you, it was gone.”

“Can you remember the poem well enough to recite it?” said I.

“I’m afraid not,” said Sammy; “but I’ll give you as much as I can recall:

“Old Caspar Keal
Had a water-wheel,
And it turned around and around.

And Caspar Keal
Set his toe and his heel
To measure a rood of ground.
For he said, 'What use
Of this great abuse
Of the stream coming down from the hill,
If it turns a wheel
For Caspar Keal,
But never turns a mill?'

"Old Caspar Keal
Would not reveal
His plans — his plans — his —

That's every bit that I can remember."

"Sammy," said I, "do you think it was a good poem?"

"No," said he, "I think it was just what Caspar tried to call it, doggerel. I only wrote it to get the lines out of my mind. Of course it was absurd to speak of the wheel being there before the mill was built. It's like a poem that I read in the paper last week, in which the poet had the Tower of Babel built before the Flood, instead of after it."

"I don't believe that's what troubled Caspar," said I.

"Then what was it?" said Sammy.

"I think the fault was in just one word."

"What word?"

"The first in the poem," said I. "A man like that is generally rather pleased to be mentioned by the poets. But you call him '*Old Caspar Keal*.' That's what hurt

him. Didn't you notice to-day that his whiskers had been carefully dyed?"

"Yes," said Sammy, "but I didn't think anything of it. And it seems to me such a big man ought not to get mad at such a little thing as that."

"I tell you what 'tis, Sammy," said I, "it doesn't do to have too much truth in your poetry. That man can't forget that word, and he'll never let you build his dam or run his mill. We might as well go and inquire at the next place—wherever that is. It's too bad that anybody should be punished for writing innocent poetry—and that poem was as innocent as a puppy; but I suppose there are some things that we'd better keep in our minds than let them out, even when they rhyme."

"I suppose so," said Sammy. "At any rate, I seem to have lost one good chance in that way."

"Sammy," said I, "are there any more business men in town that you've written poems about? For if there are, we'd better avoid them when we set out to look for another place—unless you've said complimentary things about them. If there are any of those, perhaps we'd better go to them next."

"I can't think of any at all," said he.

"It's a pity," said I. "I wish you had written a real nice poem about some civil engineer, and he had got hold of it accidentally. I feel sure he'd give you a chance right away."

"I don't know about that," said he. "I heard Dr. Morton saying to father that it was a great disadvantage to a business or professional man to have written books or poems, because his patients or customers wouldn't believe he knew how to do anything else or understood his business."

"I should think the more a man knew, and the more things he could do, the better he could do everything," said I.

"Yes," said Sammy, "that's what father said. And Dr. Morton thought so too; but he said people would persist in thinking that no one could be anything but a jack at more trades than one. And he said he knew of some notable examples to the contrary. He told about one man who, he said, is a very skilful physician and a very learned scientific man, and at the same time one of our very best poets. I forget his name, but Dr. Morton said he considered him the American Horace. Do you know Horace?"

"Horace who?" said I.

"He didn't mention any other name but Horace," said Sammy.

"I don't know him," said I; "but if you want to learn to write like him, we can easily find out."

"Oh, no, no!" said Sammy, "I don't want to write like him. I don't want to write any more at all. I wish I couldn't write anything but account-books and business

letters. Then I could do what I want to, and prosper in the world."

"Now, see here, Sammy Whitney," said I, "you're getting down-hearted, and I don't think you ought to."

"You don't know all my reasons," said he.

"But I know some of them, and I know Caspar Keal's mill isn't the only one in the world. There must be a great many other chances. And besides, Sammy, all the great successful men that I've read about went and did something themselves, something original, instead of just getting a job to do what lots of others were doing."

"Yes, I know it," said he.

"Then why don't we try to do that?" said I.

"How would you go about it?" said he.

"Why, look around for something to begin on," said I. "Take this very house, which is haunted. You see it stands empty; nobody will live in it. The owner gets no rent from it, and I suppose he has to pay taxes on it all the while. Don't you think he would be glad to pay anybody handsomely for *unhaunting* it?"

"Of course he would," said Sammy; "but who's going to do it? — and how?"

"That's the question," said I. "What hurt would it do for you and me to set our minds at work to find a way to get the ghost out of it?"

"No hurt at all," said Sammy, laughing. "But sup-

pose we succeeded, what then? Would we go around the country making a business of unhaunting houses?"

Of course I had to laugh, but I answered:

"Why not?—if we can keep our process secret, and if there are enough haunted houses to keep us busy."

"Very well," said he, "let us study the ghost problem. Can you think of any way to do it?"

"I can sleep over it, and dream over it," said I, "and let you know in the morning. There must be some way to do it, and it seems to me it's about as good a thing as we could try."

"It seems laughable to me," said Sammy, "and yet you may be right."

"You'll admit," said I, "that, if we can do it, it's a legitimate and useful thing to do."

"Certainly," said he.

"Then why shouldn't we try?" said I.

"I'm agreed," said he. "Sleep over it, and dream over it, and meet me at the boulder to-morrow."

"Of course we keep it secret," said I.

"Of course," said he.

Then I said "Agreed," and we went home.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HOUSE HAUNTED.

THAT evening I went to my father's small library to see what I could learn on the subject of haunted houses and apparitions generally. I had the luck to find an English translation of Calmet's "Phantom World," then recently published in our country, sat down to read it, and managed to get through a large part of it before bedtime.

I was usually a sound sleeper; but that night, for some reason, my eyes seemed inclined to remain open. Everybody knows that a frame-house frequently "settles," even after it has been built a long time, and that the settling produces a creaking in the joints. The sound generally passes unnoticed in the daytime; but when it occurs at night it is very distinct to wakeful occupants. Of course, it was the settling of the house that startled me just after the clock struck eleven, and not any ghostly footstep on the stair. How absurd! Stairs creak sometimes when a very heavy person is ascending them, but not when an airy ghost glides over them. It could not have been anything but the settling of the house.

Very few dwellings are entirely free from mice, and

the little creatures are especially lively at night. Everyone must have heard them scampering about the attic, their hard round tails making a rasping noise as they were drawn across the floor. Of course, it was the mice that I heard, and not the bony fingers of an apparition searching in the dark for the latch of my chamber door.

Everybody has heard, when in perfect stillness and darkness, the seeming sound of fermentation in the air; and my father had explained to me that this was produced by very slight vibrations of the atmosphere, which were magnified in the shell of the ear, just as the same effect is produced more strongly in certain sea-shells. Of course, it was this that I heard when I could hear nothing else, and not the buzzing of the wings of innumerable small spirits — deceased humming-birds, for instance.

Yes, I felt certain that I knew all about the settling of houses, the habits of mice, and the construction of the human ear; yet my mind dwelt upon Calmet's weird stories, and I did not fall asleep till almost morning.

But I arose at the usual time, and at the breakfast-table told my father what I had been reading and how much it had interested me. I did not consider it necessary to tell him how the house had settled, the mice had played, and the atmosphere had fermented. He couldn't have done anything about it, if he had known it, and a good boy never likes to make useless talk. I asked him if any more such books were to be had; and he said if I

was interested in the subject, I might go to the public library and look it up ; the librarian would help me.

As soon as the hour for opening the library arrived, I was on hand and made known my want to the kindly old man who had charge of the books. He looked over his catalogue, and then brought me four or five volumes, among which I remember "The Night Side of Nature," "Superstitions of the Highlanders," and "Truths Contained in Popular Superstitions." The librarian also showed me a set of "Notes and Queries," and told me how to look up subjects in them by means of the index.

He assigned a little alcove to me, and I soon became so interested that I forgot all about my appointment with Sammy. Indeed, it did not occur to me that I was hungry till, looking up from the story of Lady Beresford's black ribbon, my eye met the face of the town clock, which told me it was half-past three in the afternoon.

Then I walked slowly home, thinking over all that I had been reading, and trying to draw some general conclusions from it.

After getting a luncheon, I went over to see Sammy, but was told that he had gone fishing with Fred Crawford. So I returned to my home, took pen and paper, and wrote down what seemed to me the significant points in the information that I had acquired from the various books. Then I sliced the paper into pieces, each containing one point or fact, and tried to arrange them in some logical

order, so that they might present a complete argument or theory. In this I was not very successful ; but still I thought I saw dimly through the problem to a reasonable solution.

When evening came, I determined not to read any more of "The Phantom World," saying to myself that it would be wiser to spend the time in thinking over thoroughly what I had read. The way I thought it over thoroughly was by getting my "Book of Commerce" and re-reading all about the whale-fishery, dwelling carefully on the statistics. I slept much better that night.

After breakfast next morning, I met Sammy at the boulder, and explained to him why I had not kept my engagement.

"But it's all the better that I didn't," said I.

"Why so?"

"Because I've thoroughly studied up the subject, and learned about all the most famous spectres and haunted houses of ancient and modern times. And I've taken particular notice of all the things that they do in the different countries to get rid of them."

"You seem to believe in ghosts," said Sammy

"Certainly," said I. "Don't you?"

"No, not at all," said he.

This almost took my breath away. I would not have dreamed that Sammy could be an unbeliever in anything so interesting.

"If you don't believe a house can be haunted," said I, "how are you going to pretend to unhaunt it?"

"I don't believe any house is ever really haunted," said he; "but I believe there may be something in it or around it that makes strange noises or lights, and scares the people or makes it uncomfortable for them. Then they call it haunted, because they don't know what produces the racket. The thing to do is to find out the cause and remove it."

"Sammy," said I, "have you ever read 'The Phantom World'?"

"No," said he.

"Or 'The Night Side of Nature'?"

"No."

"Or 'Superstitions of the Highlanders'?"

"No."

"Or 'Certainty of a World of Spirits'?"

"No."

"Or 'Truths Contained in Popular Superstitions'?"

"No."

"Or 'Demonology and Witchcraft'?"

"No."

"Have you ever come across the story of the pig-faced lady?"

"No."

"Or the dog spectre of Eubatides?"

"No."

“Or the slave of Malta and the rock-bound coffer?”

“No.”

“Or Ayola and the spectre of the clanking chains?”

“No.”

“Do you know how high Robert Palentin jumped after he was dead?”

“No.”

“Or how Christina Tron flew like a bird to the top of the church?”

“No.”

“Or what Nicholas Tuba did in the haunted house?”

“No.”

“Then, Sammy, how can you say you don’t believe in these things, if you have never studied the subject?”

“I’m afraid you carry too many guns for me,” said he. “But, tell me, when you read all those stories didn’t you find that some of them were proved to be humbugs?”

“Oh, yes, a few of them,” said I. “There was the marked handkerchief of Fontenoy, for instance. They found out that a young blacksmith forged an iron hand and stamped it on the handkerchief, and then gave the handkerchief to a young lady to make a great mystery. But most of them are unexplained. One thing, however, is noticeable in all those stories; there is hardly one where the spectre did anybody the least harm—unless you count the one that made a mark on Lady Beresford’s wrist, so that afterward she always wore a black ribbon round it.

And who knows but that she burned it by her own carelessness, and then laid it to some honest and well-meaning spectre?"

"Well," said Sammy, "I can't explain them all—I suppose nobody can. But I look at it in this way: Millions of people have lived and died on the earth. If the spirit of one of them has the power to come back and stay among his friends, why shouldn't all of them have the same power? And if they all have the power, it seems reasonable that at least several thousand would want to use it every year. Yet we only hear of a few dozen, or may be a hundred or two, out of all the millions upon millions, that have ever shown any sign. Don't you suppose Charlie Burch would come back to us if he could, and let us know that he's around? I tell you, if there are any ghosts at all, the air must be full of them all the time. Those who believe in them ought to believe in billions of them."

"I'm afraid that argument is too big a gun for me," said I. "But I can't give up my belief right away. The subject is too interesting."

"Never mind," said Sammy, "you keep your belief and I'll keep mine, and perhaps we can manage that house all the better."

"You must bear in mind," said I, "that we've got to do two things to the house."

"What are they?"

"We must not only unhaunt it, but make people ad-

mit and believe that it is unhaunted, or else no good will be accomplished."

"That's true," said Sammy. "I don't suppose the owner will pay us until a tenant moves in and stays in, and says the house is all right."

"And, Sammy, there are two kinds of people in the world—those who believe in ghosts, and those who don't."

"Yes, that is so."

"And we don't know which kind it'll be that comes along looking for a house. If it should be a family that believe in the supernatural, they wouldn't be satisfied with what you did, and would be afraid to move in. If they should be the kind that believe in rats and loose boards and whistling chimneys, they wouldn't be satisfied with what I did. So we must please them all."

"Exactly so," said Sammy; "that's just the way that I look at it."

"Then," said I, "as I understand it, I ought to have charge of the moral powers for unhaunting the house, and you of the physical."

"That's right," said he, "and we must try to make a complete job of it."

"The next thing," said I, "is to find out who owns the house, and have a talk with him."

"Probably the people in the nearest house to the haunted one can tell us," said Sammy.

"Yes, of course," said I, and we at once set out.

Those people told us that the untenanted house was owned by a man named Parkendyke, who had a coal business in another quarter of the town; whereupon we immediately set off on a journey to see him.

We had a long walk; but at last, as we turned a corner of an unfamiliar street, Sammy exclaimed:

“There it is, ‘Parkendyke & Palmer, Coal and Wood.’”

We entered the dingy little office at the corner of the coal-yard, and found Mr. Parkendyke on the high stool at his desk. He was a small man, with a smooth-shaven face, hair streaked with gray, gold-bowed spectacles, and a pleasant manner.

We all said “Good-morning,” and then the coal-merchant assumed an expectant and accommodating attitude, as if he were only waiting to know how many tons we were about to order, and where we would have it delivered.

“We’ve come over to talk about that haunted house of yours,” said Sammy—“if you have a little time to spare.”

“Oh, that unfortunate house, yes,” said Mr. Parkendyke. “Take seats, young gentlemen.”

We took the only seats in the office, two wooden arm-chairs, each of which had lost one arm and was badly whittled and disfigured on the other.

“That house,” he continued, “isn’t mine exactly. It belongs to my niece. But I am her guardian, and of course I have charge of it. It has stood vacant a long time now, and the loss of the rent diminishes her pin-money consider-

ably. But I don't see what I can do about it. Last autumn I offered it rent-free to a poor family for three months; for so long as it stands empty it will never lose its reputation for being haunted. They moved in one day, and moved out the next. I hope you've come to tell me of somebody that has pluck enough to move in and stay."

"We don't exactly know that kind of family just yet," said I. "But we think we can fix it so that somebody will move in."

"How would you do that?" said he.

"Unhaunt it," said I.

"What?" said he, apparently a little bewildered.

"Unhaunt the house," I repeated. "Get the ghosts out of it, and make them stay out."

"How can you do it?" said he.

"I don't think we ought to tell the process," said I. "If we've studied up the subject and found out how to do it—and we think we have—we ought to have the benefit of that study ourselves, not give it away."

"That's reasonable and business-like," said Mr. Parkendyke. "I'm glad to see that you have sound business ideas. I won't ask you *how* you propose to do it, but do you feel certain you *can* do it?"

"I think we may be reasonably certain of it," said Sammy.

"Well," said the coal-merchant, "if you can get the mystery out of that house without burning it down, I

shall be willing to pay you liberally. I thought once of moving the house to a lot in the outskirts of the town, and putting up a new building in place of it. But some people think the ghost goes with the house, and others think it remains on the lot; so I should have two troubles on my hands instead of one. Does your process require any costly materials?"

"Not very," said Sammy, "but there will be a little expense."

"How long do you think it will take?"

"We ought not to be more than a week about it."

"By the way, who are you?"

We gave him our names, and those of our fathers; and he said he knew them both.

"Well, boys, I've a notion to let you try it. The house is good for nothing as it stands, and you can't make it any more valueless than it is. What is your price — if you succeed?"

We told him we had not fixed any price, as this was the first house we had ever unhaunted.

"I suppose the price ought to bear a certain proportion to the rental," said he. "If you succeed with this house, young gentlemen, and go into the business, you'd better make your terms equal to the rent for a certain number of months."

Sammy thanked him for the suggestion, and I said we would adopt it.

"If I give you fifty dollars in case of your success, will that be satisfactory?"

We said it would be entirely satisfactory.

"Perhaps," said Sammy, "before we begin, we ought to know more exactly what the troubles are. Of course we've heard a great deal about the haunt, but the stories don't all agree."

"No," said Mr. Parkendyke, "they never do agree in such a case. As nearly as I can find out about this house, the tenants hear terrible noises at night, like slamming of doors and breaking of glass. One said he thought the chimney had fallen over and the bricks were sliding down the roof. Another said it sounded as if the finger-nails of an enormous iron hand were scratching off the paint from the side of the house. Another was sure he heard footsteps on the back stairs, at midnight, about like those of a man in his stocking-feet. Since the house was empty, strange lights have been seen in it, though it is certain that nobody was there. Do you really think you can cure all that?"

"We'd like to try," said Sammy.

"Do you know how much your expenses will be?"

Sammy and I conferred together, and then told him we thought they could hardly go beyond ten dollars.

"You are enterprising boys," said he, "which is the kind I like, though I'm sorry to say I haven't any boys of my own. It seems hardly fair to ask you to take all the

risk, so I'll advance you ten dollars on the pay." And he handed us the money. "But there's one more point that we must settle," he continued. "When you've unhaunted the house, as you call it, how are you to prove to me that you really have done away with the trouble?"

"We won't ask you for the remainder of the pay," said Sammy, "until some tenant has lived in the house a month and says he is satisfied."

"Business-like again!" said Mr. Parkendyke. "That ought to be satisfactory to any house-owner. But I think we'd better have a written contract."

Sammy and I assented to this, though neither of us knew much about written contracts; and Mr. Parkendyke took a sheet of paper from his desk and drew up the agreement. When he read it to us, we learned that we were the parties of the first part, and he was the party of the second part. I have often been called a "party" since, but it does not please me now as it did then. We also learned from the reading that we, the parties of the first part, agreed and covenanted to "unhaunt the frame dwelling-house No. 85 Cliff Street, to wit: to rid it effectually of all ghosts, spooks, apparitions, spectres, or other supernatural influences that make it undesirable as a place of residence;" that we were to have the keys of the house and full possession for any necessary length of time not to exceed one month; and that we were empowered to do any and all things whatsoever that might per-

tain to our system of unhaunting, provided we did not destroy the house or any considerable part of it. The price was set forth, as already agreed; and finally it declared that we had "hereunto set our hands and seals."

I knew I had two serviceable hands, and could write a pretty good hand, but I was puzzled to think what I should do for a seal, as I had never owned one, when Mr. Parkendyke took a small box out of his desk and produced three little diamond-shaped pieces of paper, with red wafers, and stuck them upon the right-hand side of the document, below the writing. Then he wrote his name in front of the last one, and by his direction we wrote ours before the others.

Mr. Parkendyke folded up the contract and put it into his safe. He then took down the keys of the house from a nail behind his desk and handed them to us, and we bade him good-day.

"Sammy," said I, as we walked away, "why do you suppose he was so willing to advance us this money, when he knew so little about what we are going to do?"

Sammy took a minute to think, and then answered:

"He probably thinks that it will be well to have the news go out that something has been done to unhaunt the house, no matter what, and then somebody will want to move in. And, besides, the money doesn't come out of his own pocket: of course he'll charge it to his niece's estate."

"Shall we begin work to-day?" said I.

"We'd better go and look the house over first," said Sammy.

The haunted house was close to the street, so that the front steps touched the sidewalk. There was a small side yard, entered by a gate from the street, and on the other side the house was about two feet from the fence that divided its lot from the next. There was also a small square back yard, surrounded by a high board fence. The house had the appearance of a pretty good dwelling, a little out of repair.

As we stood in front of it, taking a good look at it before entering, I proposed that we begin by going entirely around it on the outside. Sammy assented, and we entered the little side yard. There was nothing here but the remnant of a long-neglected flower-bed with a small broken trellis and three overthrown stakes on which climbing vines had once been trained.

The back yard was even more forlorn. In one corner was an old barrel nearly full of ashes, in another was an overturned dog-kennel, and near the centre grew a single head of cabbage and two stalks of hollyhock. There was a sloping outside cellar door with rusty hinges, and moss growing in the cracks between the boards. Against the high fence dangled a kite, probably belonging to some boy who had been afraid to come into the yard to rescue it. Close by the north fence was a barren and half-dead cherry-

tree, on which, as we entered the yard, alighted a yellow bird, the only living thing there.

"Sammy," said I, "I can't see but that the sun shines as fair and bright in this deserted yard as on Carlisle wall or the city of Zoar, and yet somehow there seems to be something about it that makes it different from every other place of the kind."

"Yes," said he, "it does seem mysterious, but I suppose the mystery is all in our own minds."

"If I could only see a cat sitting peaceably on that fence," said I, "not a black cat, but a nice gray and white one, like ours at home, I think I should feel different."

Sammy laughed, and said:

"I should be satisfied with a black one. *Our* cat is jet black."

"Do you think that proves," said I, "that supernatural things are only the things we're not used to?"

"I hope it does," said he.

In the narrow passage between the house and the side fence we found nothing but three old bottles and the rusty head of a garden-rake.

"I wonder if that could have been the iron hand that scratched on the house," said Sammy, looking curiously at the rake.

We now ascended the front steps, and I put the key into the lock, which I judged, from the size of the key, must be rather large and clumsy. Then I paused a mo-

ment, considering whether I would better turn it softly, and thus perhaps catch sight of the haunters, or turn it with as much noise as possible, and thus warn them to get out of our way. I decided to turn it as noisily as I could; and when the great bolt had gone back with a click and a bang, I waited a moment before opening the door, almost expecting to hear scampering footsteps.

When we entered we found the air inside warm and oppressive, as if the house had been tightly closed for a long time, and Sammy at once opened two windows on opposite sides. The front room was devoid of everything in the way of furniture, except that a broken mirror hung on the wall. After we had examined carefully every corner, and tried the sash-locks to see if they were fast, and looked into the fireplace, we stopped before the mirror.

"Do you think there is anything behind it?" said I.

"Turn it and see," said Sammy.

I turned it. Nothing appeared but a dusty cobweb.

"What does the natural philosophy say about the reflection of light?" said he.

"It says the angle of incidence is equal to the angle of reflection."

"Yes," said he, backing up against the mirror and standing with his head against it and his eyes directed toward the windows. "Yes, that means it glances off from a shiny surface with the same slant at which it struck it."

"Exactly so," said I.

“Now, I should say,” said he, “that when that street-lamp out there is lighted, the light that comes from it through that left-hand window and strikes this glass would go out through that right-hand window, and if a person happened to be standing in front of that horse-block, he would see it through the window. Then he would go away and say he had seen strange lights in this house.”

I pushed Sammy aside, and took his place with my head against the mirror. After calculating the angles as well as I could, I said :

“Yes, that’s exactly what he would see, and I suppose that accounts for the mysterious lights.”

Then we turned the glass round, face to the wall.

We went carefully through the house, opening windows in every part to give it an airing.

We found that the door between the dining-room and the kitchen had lost its latch, and from a defect in the hinge, when it was left to itself, it swung to a point that left it open by about three hand-breadths. While we were looking at it a strong breeze or draft came down the chimney and out through the fireplace into the room. The door instantly shut with considerable noise, and a moment later we heard another door slam up-stairs. On examination we found that a door at the head of the back stairs was also without a latch and in a condition similar to that of the one just described. Making two or three experiments, we proved that when the door at the foot of

the back stairs was wide open, the sudden shutting of either of the two defective doors would cause the other to shut violently, the impulse being transmitted by the movement of the air between them. This can be shown by a simple experiment in almost any house.

"There," said Sammy, "I think we have accounted for some of the noises, as well as the lights."

"Yes, some of them," said I. "But I don't believe that was all. You know they heard something like breaking of glass. We'd better look for mysterious marks on the window-panes."

"No objection to *looking* for them," said Sammy, and I looked, but I didn't find any.

"I suppose there might be marks on those panes," said I, "which couldn't be seen at all in the day time, but would shine out like blood-red fire in the night."

"Yes," said Sammy, "there *might* be."

"But you don't think there are?" said I.

"You can come some night and see," said he.

On the second floor we found nothing until we entered a room that was evidently intended as a store-room. In one corner was a broken hair trunk, and near the window an old-fashioned cradle. I put my finger to the cradle and rocked it. It rocked very easily, but one of the rockers was slightly flattened, so that it gave a little thump on the floor at every vibration. Sammy came up and examined the window, in which he found a broken light.

"I should say," said he, "that a strong breeze blowing from the north through that hole in the window might rock that cradle."

"Yes," said I, "it might ; or the hand of a spectre could rock it, for it takes very little force — see!" and I started it by the motion of my little finger.

Sammy laughed, and said :

"All right! stick to your moral forces; that's what you're here for."

"Do you know whether there is an attic to the house?" said I, while Sammy was carrying the cradle to the corner of the room and turning it up on end against the wall.

"From the appearance on the outside," said he, "I should think there must be a large one."

We looked for the attic stairs, but found instead only a scuttle, and we discovered the ladder in a closet. When we had put this up, Sammy mounted first, pushing up the scuttle with his head. As he did so he saw a great rat run away from a pile of old books and magazines.

I followed Sammy into the attic, which was lighted by a large window at the rear end. There was nothing in it, besides the pile of old books, except campaign portraits of Scott and Graham, in a veneered frame with a broken glass. We examined the window carefully. One light of glass was completely gone. Presently I discovered pieces of glass on the floor directly under the window. Stooping

down and laying them together carefully, as the broken edges corresponded with one another, I formed a complete pane of glass, of the same size as those in the sash. Sammy then examined the sash itself and found four bent pins sticking in it around the empty panel.

"That tells the story as plain as can be," said he. "A pane of glass was broken from this window. Somebody got a new pane, and instead of having a glazier put it in on the outside of the sash, with putty, where it belongs, he (or more probably she) put it on the inside and fastened it with these pins. Some dark night, when the wind was strong from the west, it blew it in, and of course it was smashed on the floor. Then the people who lived in the house told their friends they heard supernatural noises in the night, like the breaking of glass."

"Y-e-s," said I, "if it *was* the wind that pushed it in."

"What else could it be?" said he.

"I don't know," said I.

"It might possibly have been a bird flying against it," said he; "but birds don't often do that unless there's a light inside."

"I'd as lief it would be the wind as a bird," said I.

"But I suppose you'd rather it would be a spectre than either," said he.

I made no answer to this, and we descended the ladder and took it down.

We visited the cellar, where we found nothing but a

few empty barrels and a small pile of kindling-wood, and caught a glimpse of another rat.

Then we carefully closed all the windows and doors, locked up the house, and walked home.

"Sammy," said I, "which do you think we'd better use first, the physical or the moral forces? — or shall we put them both into play at once?"

"I think we'd better use the physical forces first," he answered.

"That's what I think," said I. "The moral forces will be likely to attract people's attention, but I don't suppose the physical will."

"I don't know what the moral forces are to be," said he, "but I know the physical ones will be very quiet."

"The moral ones," said I, "will be those that have been most highly approved by the experience of centuries among all people. I have studied them carefully and made a memorandum of them for this occasion."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HOUSE UNHAUNTED.

NEXT morning Sammy and I went down town together to purchase the materials for the unhaunting. The physical forces that he bought were two panes of glass and a ball of putty, two door-latches and a screw-driver, three good rat-traps and half a pound of cheese. The moral forces that I bought were a yard of red flannel, two spools of red thread, four feet of rubber tubing, a piece of chalk, a hundred and fifty feet of second-hand gas-pipe (half-inch calibre), and a pound of ten-penny nails. Sammy called his purchases the materials, and mine the immaterials.

We had brought a large basket, into which we put all these things except the gas-pipe (which the gas-fitter agreed to deliver at the house next day), covered them with a newspaper, and carried them to the haunted house. When we were near it we met three boys whom we knew.

"Let us pass by the house," whispered Sammy, and we said hello and good-morning to the boys and walked on as if we had never heard of such a house. But after they were out of sight we hastened back, entered, and carefully locked the door behind us.

We put all the things into the china-closet except the glass and putty, and locked them up.

"The first thing to do is to mend those windows," said Sammy. "We'd better begin with the attic."

So we went up the ladder again, hearing the rats run away at our approach, and with some difficulty got the sash of the attic window out of its frame. We laid it on the floor, and Sammy set to work with his pocket-knife to prepare the sash for the new glass by cutting out the remnants of the old putty.

"While you are doing that," said I, "wouldn't it be best for me to bring that old looking-glass up here? Somebody that comes to look at the house when it is offered for rent may turn it face outward again, and then passers-by on the street will see as many mysterious lights as they saw before."

"Yes, bring it up," said Sammy.

So I went down and got the glass, carried it to the attic, and placed it where Scott and Graham could see how they looked after the campaign was over.

The old putty was very hard, and Sammy nearly ruined his knife; but he succeeded in getting in the glass and putting on the fresh putty. It was by no means a handsome job, but it appeared to be strong and tight, and beauty was not necessary in an attic window.

We replaced the sash with considerable pride, and then descended the ladder and repeated the process with

the broken window in the store-room, to which I had to sacrifice my knife, because the edge had been taken off from every blade of Sammy's. But his experience in the attic proved valuable, and he got through with this task in less time than that had taken.

"Don't you think the old cradle had better go to the attic too?" said I.

"Yes," said he, "and turn it upside down, so that it can't rock."

Accordingly I carried it to the attic and overturned it on the floor, where the unsuccessful candidates could look at it as emblematic of the condition of our liberties, if they wanted to.

After the store-room window was mended, we put the two new latches on the doors that needed them, and Sammy said he thought we'd better get new hinges also the next day, to which I of course agreed.

Then we baited the three rat-traps, and placed one in the attic, one in the kitchen, and one in the cellar.

"I suppose we're not likely to catch any rats except at night," said I.

"Probably not," said Sammy; "at any rate, we must give them time enough."

We then went into the yard to slick it up a little, and I made a discovery.

"Sammy," said I, "the physical forces that haunt this house are none of my business, and I don't intend to med-

dle with them. But, as I am your best friend, I think I ought to tell you something that concerns you."

"What is it?" said he.

"I think," said I, "that I have found the great, ghostly iron hand that scratched on the house."

"Where is it?"

"There," said I, pointing to a large limb of the cherry-tree, the end of which was broken off in a sharp stub that just touched the house. "You can easily imagine what must happen when the wind sways that tree."

"Thank you," said he. "I'll bring a saw to-morrow."

We locked up the house, and went home.

Next morning we found that the three rat-traps had done their duty nobly, and we had a quiet triple funeral in the back yard. Sammy had brought a hand-saw, and he climbed the cherry-tree and sawed off the limb that touched the house.

The gas-pipe was delivered promptly as agreed. It was in lengths of about ten feet each, and I carried it into the hall and laid it on the floor.

"We must keep setting those traps," said Sammy, "until we catch every rat in the house."

"All right!" said I; "I'll try to be patient, but that makes it rather tedious waiting for the moral forces to begin their work."

We visited the house and examined the traps every morning and evening. We never failed to catch three

rats at night, and generally there were one or two captures in the day time, till we had taken nineteen in all. After trying for two days and nights to get another and make it an even score, Sammy gave it up and said that he was satisfied. Meanwhile we put new hinges on the two troublesome doors.

"But there's one thing more that I'd like to do," said he, "though it is not absolutely necessary."

"What is that?"

"I'd like to have the whole house thoroughly cleaned."

I agreed to this, and we went to see an old Scotch woman who had often done house-cleaning for Mrs. Whitney. When we explained our errand she was horrified.

"Me go into that uncanny house and clean it?" said she; "no, not for all the world!"

"You wouldn't have to be there at night," said I.

"It doesn't signify," said she.

"And we would go there with you and stay in the house all the time you were at work," said Sammy.

"No more does that signify," said she. "I remember too well the fate of a poor woman that tried to clean such a house in Dundee."

"What was her fate?" said I.

"She fell from a step-ladder and broke her right arm," said Mrs. McGregor.

"We'll get a very broad, firm step-ladder, not a shaky one," said Sammy.

"It doesn't signify," she repeated, solemnly.

"What price do you generally have when you go out cleaning?" said I.

"Always seventy-five cents a day," said she.

"We'll give you double that price," said I.

"Let me think about that, young gentlemen," said Mrs. McGregor. "How soon must you have it done?"

"Right away — to-morrow, if possible."

"Have either of you a gun?" said she.

"We haven't a gun exactly," said I, "but each of us has a pistol."

"Gun or pistol, it's all the same," said she. "Load it with a silver bullet, and stay by me with the pistol in your hand, and I'll clean the haunted house for the double price."

"All right!" said Sammy, "to-morrow morning."

"To-morrow morning it is, young gentlemen," said Mrs. McGregor.

"I didn't suppose the world was so cheap," said Sammy, as we were walking home.

"How cheap is it?" said I.

"According to that woman," said he, "it is worth something less than a dollar and a half."

"She's not the only person that ever bid on the world when it wasn't for sale," said I.

We went to Sammy's home, and he brought out a hammer and a ten-cent piece and his pistol. With the bowlder

for an anvil, as usual, he hammered the coin into a small, rough ball.

"I think that will do," said he. "It doesn't fit the pistol very closely, but that's no matter."

"Yes, it's just as well," said I. "You'll only have to take it out again after the day is over."

Immediately after breakfast the next morning we went to Mrs. McGregor's house. Sammy showed her the pistol and the bullet. She put the bullet into her mouth, held it there awhile, and then handed it back, saying:

"That's right, young gentlemen, that's real silver. Was it German silver it would taste brassy."

Sammy let her see him put it into the pistol, and then he put a wad of paper over it and rammed it down.

We helped her carry her broom and scrubbing things, and walked as fast as possible to the haunted house, having the good luck not to meet any of the boys. I thought Mrs. McGregor exhibited some little trepidation as she followed us across the threshold, but she had braced her nerves for the occasion, and said nothing.

We brought down the old books and magazines from the attic, Sammy sawed into short lengths the limb that he had cut from the cherry-tree, and we brought out the empty barrels from the cellar and knocked them to pieces. With this supply of fuel we soon had a hot fire in the kitchen range, while Mrs. McGregor rolled up her sleeves and began to act as if her foot were on her native heath.

While Sammy, with the loaded pistol in his hand, remained to protect her, I went to the nearest neighbor's and borrowed a step-ladder.

As noon approached, Mrs. McGregor intimated that she was always furnished with luncheon and a cup of tea where she worked out. Thereupon I took our basket from the china-closet and went to market, returning with a small supply of tea, bread, and other things, to which I added the unused portion of Sammy's half pound of cheese. Our hostess — I mean employé — had brought a teapot.

Mrs. McGregor then dropped the character of scrub-woman and assumed that of cook, and in a little while the meal was on the table. The kitchen table was a broad board fastened to the wall with hinges, which could be let down when not in use. Sammy and I brought in the dog-kennel and laid it on its side, which formed a seat for one. He and I took our luncheon standing. It was soon evident that where Mrs. McGregor sat was the head of the table.

She cleaned that house thoroughly and beautifully, washing the windows, sweeping down the walls, and making everything look wholesome. As there was no furniture to be moved and dusted, and no carpets or pictures to deal with, she accomplished it all in a single hard day's work. Sammy and I by turns followed her about from room to room, pistol in hand, according to the agreement.

Late in the afternoon she opened the door of an old

wooden cupboard that stood in the passage-way to the cellar, and suddenly closed it again and started back.

"What is it?" said we.

"It's there, in that cupboard," said she, in a whisper.

Sammy, who happened to be on guard at the time, walked to the cupboard at once, and stretched out his hand to open it. But she pulled him back.

"Don't do it, don't open the door," said she. "Don't go there for the world."

"Nor for a dollar and a half?" said Sammy.

"Fire at it," said she, not seeing his sarcasm.

"Fire at what?" said Sammy.

"Fire right through the door at *it*," said she.

"All right! — just as you say," he answered, and, holding the pistol within a yard of the cupboard door, he blazed away, and the report ran through that empty house like the sudden fame of a dark horse through the political world.

"That's a brave young gentleman," said she.

Then he threw open the cupboard door, and said: "You see there's nothing whatever in there."

"There's nothing there *now*," said she, "because you've sent it away, and it'll never come back."

The silver bullet had gone through the thin panel of the door and lodged in the back of the cupboard.

"Would you mind giving me that bullet, young gentleman?" said she.

"Certainly not," said Sammy, and dug it out with the

point of his knife. "But ought we not to load it into the pistol again?"

"I don't think there'll be any further occasion for it," said she.

So he handed her the bullet, and she put it into her pocket, remarking in an undertone that it would be "henceforth very valuable."

When her work was done, we paid her wages, locked up the house, and carried home for her the implements we had brought; while she herself, with commendable thrift, carried the small stock of provision that was left from the luncheon.

"Now, Sammy," said I, as we went to the house the next day, "your physical forces have had their turn, and I've no doubt they have produced a good effect on the house. But for the proper and necessary effect on the minds of the people, we must use the moral forces."

"All right!" said he; "go ahead with your moral forces."

"Here are four of them," said I, drawing from under my jacket four large rosettes, which my sister had made for me from the yard of red flannel.

I had brought along a hammer, a pair of grippers borrowed of the gas-fitter, a few carpet-tacks, string, etc. When we arrived at the house I began by nailing one of the rosettes upon each corner of the building. Then I chalked a picture of a four-leaved clover on the front door.

Then I brought out a spool of red thread, drove a tack into the corner of the house, tied the end of the thread to it, and with the spool in my hand went around the house seven times, so that it wove a belt of seven threads, though the house was so large that I had to tie on a portion from the other spool.

Two boys had stopped in front of the house when they saw me nailing on the rosettes, and by this time half a dozen more had gathered. To all their questions we turned deaf ears.

"There," said I to Sammy, "that begins to look like it. These things have great difficulty in stepping over a red thread."

"I'm glad to hear it," said he.

"Now please help me bring out these gas-pipes," said I, and we carried them into the yard.

Driving nails into the side of the house at intervals to hold the pipe, I screwed the lengths together, using the big grippers, until I had a continuous pipe encircling the house. It was arranged in a slight spiral, so as to have a slope all the way from one end to the other. At the side of the house protruded from the cellar wall the end of a pipe from the water-works, where a hose could be fastened for watering the little garden. I put one end of my piece of rubber hose on this, and made it tight with string; the other end I fastened similarly to the higher end of the gas-pipe. Then I turned on the water.

"There," said I, "that both looks and sounds well. It is the universal experience of mankind that those things cannot cross a stream of running water."

"I'm delighted to hear it," said Sammy.

By this time there was a considerable crowd in front of the house, mostly boys, but including also a few grown people.

"You stay here and keep off the crowd," said I to Sammy, "while I go for some more things."

I went to a butcher's shop and asked him if he could let me have a red calf's tail.

"Certainly," said he, getting one for me.

At first he refused to take pay for it, but when I declined to tell him what I was going to do with it, he said he guessed I'd better give him ten cents, which I did.

I stopped at a blacksmith's shop and bought three old worn horseshoes.

When I returned to the house Sammy and I brought out the kennel upon the front steps, and standing on it, I nailed the calf's tail over the front door, so that it hung down and would brush the head of a person passing in.

The crowd had now grown very large, and contained three or four women, evidently not of American birth, who not only showed that they understood the exercises, but proceeded to criticise them. One stepped up and examined a rosette. "That's excellent," said she, "but it looks like new flannel. It would be better if it had

been worn by a child under three years with dark hair and eyes."

"You see," I whispered to Sammy, "the moral forces are beginning to have their effect on the minds of the people."

"Yes," said he, "and I guess the minds are about equal to the forces."

Another woman, who appeared to be somewhat near-sighted, walked up the steps and looked closely at the calf's tail.

"It's the best thing in the world," said she, "if it's been slaughtered just three days. I hope it has."

Another came up and wanted to speak to me privately. I asked her to step into the parlor.

"Have you a cake of beeswax?" said she.

"No, madam," said I, "but I'll get one if you say so."

"Let me go for it, young gentleman," said she.

"Very well," said I, handing her a half dollar, "you can get it out of that."

She returned in due time with a thin cake of beeswax worth about twenty cents.

"Lend me your knife," said she.

With my knife she cut out the central portion of the cake, leaving a ring, which she hung upon the knob of the door.

"There," said she, "I've known that to be more effectual than a calf's tail, or a red thread, though I'm not say-

ing they're not good in their way. The next time the clock strikes seven you must be sure to take off that ring before the seventh stroke and burn it up."

"Thank you, madam," said I, "we'll try to remember to do so."

She did not offer me the change, and I was either too much of a gentleman or too much of a boy to ask her for it. Slipping into her pocket the wax that she had cut from the cake, and wishing us good luck, she disappeared in the crowd.

Another woman, a very old one, now came up solemnly and said to us :

"Young gentlemen, I see the house is empty. All these things will be useless unless you carry in a Bible. Take my advice, carry in a Bible."

"Yes," said a man who overheard her, "and put the front door-key on it too, if you want to make a sure thing of it."

"Thank you both," said I; "you are undoubtedly right."

Seeing Babbity Ban in the crowd, I beckoned to him, and asked him if he would run up to our house and bring me a Bible. He set off at once, running at his best pace, and soon returned with the book in his hand.

"Your m-m-m-mother wasn't at home," said he, as I met him at the foot of the steps, "and I couldn't make that new G-g-g-german servant understand what I wanted.

So I just snatched the book and d-d-d-dodged past her, and brought it along."

I saw it was not a Bible that he had brought, but the works of Josephus. But I said:

"All right, thank you, Babbity," and, taking the book from him, I at the same time reverently took off my cap and held it so that it hid the title.

"Sammy," said I, "the door-key."

He withdrew the great brass key from the lock and laid it on the book, and I marched solemnly into the house and placed them on the mantel in the parlor.

"Now I wouldn't be afraid to stay in that house alone to-night," said the old woman, as she hobbled away.

I looked at Sammy in a way that said, as plainly as if I had spoken, "You begin to see the power of the moral forces, don't you?" And he returned the look in a way to indicate that he did.

Finally I took my three horse-shoes, my hammer, and some nails, and went out. I nailed one shoe to the face of the bottom step, another to the gate-post, and the third over the back door. Then I came again to the front door, and, standing on the top step, made a speech to the crowd, which was now very large and becoming a little impatient:

"Ladies and gentlemen: This house, as you all know, was once haunted and for a long time uninhabitable. Strange lights were seen here, and strange sounds were

heard. The timid avoided passing it by night, and even the bravest hardly dared to enter it by day. The garden was neglected, the windows became dingy, and the spirit of decay was creeping over it. But to-day all is changed. By a skilful combination of moral and physical forces, the building has been *unhaunted*, and we trust it will soon be once more a desirable residence and a happy home. If red thread, running water, a ring of beeswax, and the tail of a calf these three days slain have any virtue, no evil thing can ever approach this house again. These appliances will remain as you see them until one midnight has passed and one cock has crowed. After that they will be removed, and the house will be then offered for rent at a very reasonable figure.

"Ladies and gentlemen: You are now cordially invited to inspect the unhaunted house. Please pass in at the front door, out at the back door, and through the gate. If any wish to see the second story, they may pass up the front stairs and down the back stairs."

"Mercy me! young gentlemen," said an old woman, "would you have them all cross the house? What are you thinking of?"

"What is 'crossing the house?'" said I, in a whisper, to Sammy.

"I think she means going in at one door and out at the other," he answered; "I believe that is considered unlucky."



“THE BUILDING HAS BEEN UNHAUNTED.”

"You are right, madam," said I, "and I thank you for reminding me of it. I will lock the back door."

They swarmed into the house, and seemed curious to see every nook and cranny of it. Sammy, who had anticipated something of this sort, and saw that nearly all the boys we knew, and a good many more, were in the crowd, had sent one of them on a private errand to the confectioner's. He now unlocked the china closet, and got out a package containing five pounds of broken candy. Calling three of the boys, he told them to hold out their caps, which he filled.

"Please pass it around to all the people," said he.

One of them, Babbity Ban, when he returned with his empty cap, remarked :

"The g-g-g-grown people and the g-g-g-girls don't appear to like candy, but the b-b-b-boys all took it."

About a pound being left in the paper, Sammy walked around, offering it to the grown people and the girls, and in a very few minutes it was all gone.

"They seem to see a good deal of d-d-d-difference between a b-b-b-boy's cap and a b-b-b-brown paper," said Babbity to me, in a half whisper.

I hoped the crowd would now disperse, but they showed no signs of it.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said I, "we will next sing a well-known patriotic hymn, in which you are all invited to join."

As Pete Ruyter had a fine voice, and could sing pretty well, as we boys thought, I asked him to lead. He immediately swallowed his candy, and began :

“ Mein country, 'tis of thee.”

Everybody joined in, and the unhaunted house was filled with music till its wooden walls vibrated to the tune. When this was finished, I supposed, of course, they would all go away ; but it seemed harder to get the live people out of the house than it had been to clear it of ghosts. So I said :

“ Ladies and gentlemen, the exercises are now closed. We thank you for your kind attendance.”

Then they began to go away, and in a little while nobody was left but Sammy and me, and a few of our choicest friends.

“ Did you s-s-s-sleep in this house one night, before you un-un-unhaunted it ? ” said Babbity.

“ No,” said I, “ we never thought of it.”

“ I should think you'd have wanted to know exactly what k-k-k-kind of g-g-g-ghosts you had to deal with here.”

“ I believe they are all about alike,” said Sammy.

“ I'm g-g-g-glad to know it,” said Babbity. “ I should have s-s-supposed that the ghost of a Hot-hot-hot-tentot warrior and the ghost of a M-m-m-maltese cat would require different t-t-t-treatment.”

"No," said I, "by our system we have one uniform process for all."

We left all the things as they were, and locked up the house for the night.

In the morning Sammy and I, with the help of Fred Crawford and Gouldburn Hinks, removed them. We sold the gas-pipe back to the gas-fitter at half the price we paid him for it, and carried the other things home. Then we put a sign on the house: "This place to rent, on reasonable terms. Inquire at the office of Parkendyke & Palmer."

Two days afterward a family moved in. As they found no fault with the house, at the end of the stipulated month, we called on Mr. Parkendyke for the remainder of our money, which he paid promptly and cheerfully.

"Now I wish you would tell me how you did that thing," said he.

"That's not exactly in the bargain," said I, speaking quickly, for I was afraid Sammy would tell him. "We agreed to unhaunt your house, and we've done it thoroughly; but we didn't agree to teach you the profession."

"That's true," said he, laughing, "and I'm glad to see that you have level heads for business. Please sign this receipt, and we shall part good friends."

We signed the receipt for the money he had paid us, and bade him good afternoon.

Figuring up our expenses, we found they came to nine

dollars and sixty cents, which left a fraction over forty dollars to divide between us, and we went home feeling rich and happy.

"Sammy," said I, growing philosophical, "do you think people can ever afford to despise either moral or physical forces?"

"No," said he "I think not."

"I think so too," said I.

"By the way," said he, "I was afraid you really believed those things, until I saw you take that 'Works of Josephus' and slip your cap over the title. Then I knew you were fooling—fooling the people and not yourself. I had hard work to keep from laughing at your solemn face when I laid the key on the book."

"I don't fool the people," said I, "they fool themselves—if they are fooled at all. But who knows? They have been doing these things for centuries, and it would take a much longer time to unteach them than it took to unhaunt that house."

"I suppose you are right," said he. "And I wish we knew how many haunted houses there are in the country."

"Father says he has seen only two in all his life," said I. "And mother has heard of only one other."

"Then we can't make unhaunting our profession."

"It looks that way," said I, "unless this newly invented spirit-rapping increases the number of haunted houses."

CHAPTER XX.

THE FICKLENESS OF FAME.

MONEY is solid, glory is fluid. It is easy to divide money ; it is not so easy to divide glory, and make it stay divided. Sammy Whitney and I shared equally the money that we earned by unhaunting the Parkendyke house ; but, by one of those strange and yet common perversities of Fame or Rumor (or whatever is the best name for the spirit of popular misinformation), of which I have known so many instances in later years, the credit of the performance was not shared equally. In fact, it was hardly divided at all ; it went mainly to Sammy.

First, Miss Parkendyke, who owned the house, wrote a beautiful letter acknowledging the service, and addressed it to Sammy alone. In a postscript she added, "Please present my thanks also to the little comrade who assisted you. I forget his name." That meant me. "Little comrade !" and I was an inch taller than Sammy, besides being four days older.

Second, I found that the boys, although they heard me make the speeches and conduct the public ceremonies of the unhaunting, had got it into their heads that all the

ideas and arrangements originated with Sammy. He did not tell them any such thing, but they thought he was too generous to claim the credit that belonged to him. While I was old enough to refrain from setting them right, I was not above being annoyed by the circumstance. Of the new panes of glass, the new door-latches, and the rat-traps (which were the effective things, and were really his), the boys knew nothing; while they attributed to him the popular and picturesque features of the performance, which were mine. The most enterprising journal, striving to beat its contemporaries at the expense of beating all the truth out of a piece of news, could not have misled its readers more completely.

If I speak somewhat bitterly of journalism, it is perhaps because my third and greatest wrong came through that channel. One of the city papers got hold of the story of the unhaunting (or thought it did), and set it forth to the extent of a column and a half, with display heads. I remember one of the heads was: "A Bright Little Son of Gershom Whitney the Hero of the Affair." Gershom was the name, not of Sammy's father, but of his uncle, who had five daughters and no sons. The materials were evidently obtained from the boys, and then worked up by what the reporter was pleased to consider his imagination. Sammy's name was printed in full; mine did not appear at all. Even my speeches were attributed to him, and he was represented as saying many things that

neither of us could or would have said. The reporter's imagination substituted a bull's head for the calf's tail over the front door, and — probably because he heard the boys mention gas-pipe around the house — he wrote that we “brilliantly illuminated the building with gas-jets, inside and out.” Evidently he had never heard of running water in connection with ghosts and witches. He represented us as beating a Chinese gong to call a crowd, and then putting up the lease of the house at auction, and added (for his imagination was rich in criticism as well as in facts) that “the impressive ceremony of presenting the key to the highest bidder was somewhat marred by the stuttering of the boy who performed it.” The three horseshoes were the only item that he reported correctly. Apparently he had heard of horseshoes before. In short, the whole thing was about like the work of the average reporter of to-day.

My feelings on reading that article and pondering over it were such as can be realized by none but those who have had the same experience. If Tacitus and Milton had known what I know, instead of writing that the love of fame is the last infirmity of noble minds, they would have placed it among the first infirmities of ignoble ones. The blunders of the newspaper threw me into a half-suppressed but sleepless rage, which smouldered day and night, and at times made me doubt if all civilization were not a failure, and especially that profession which calls

itself the crowning glory of civilization — that great engine of liberty and progress, by means of which a man at his breakfast-table may read full particulars of the ball games and horse races of the preceding day, with an account also of the murders and accidents up to midnight. I was in such a state of mind that I would have voted for a rigid censorship of the press, or to boycott a paper for the slightest error of fact in the news columns.

I called at the office of the offending journal, and asked to see the editor, to whose room, after considerable difficulty, I succeeded in penetrating. I explained to him, as well as I could, the nature of my grievance; and in reply he told me that the gentleman (he actually called him a gentleman!) who wrote that article had just gone out of town for his annual fishing and vacation; but he assured me that as soon as that gentleman returned he would call his attention to the matter, and if (if!) there was any slight (slight!) error in the article, it would be corrected by a paragraph in a future issue. I think the fishes in Rice Lake must have caught and eaten that gentleman, instead of his catching them; for no corrective paragraph appeared, though I looked anxiously for it every day for many weeks. Furthermore, though I made diligent inquiries, I never found anyone who had seen a gentleman in that office.

Long afterward I learned that Sammy also called on the editor, and asked to have a correction published, but

experienced the greatest difficulty in making him understand that he was not another boy seeking to have credit given to himself, which had been awarded to some one else. The man could not comprehend that any one should want to surrender any glory that had been given to him by mistake.

This incident turned the whole course of my life. When Sammy and I agreed that I should go with him one day to find business, and he should go with me another day, I intended, though I did not express the intention to him, to go in the direction of journalism as the only practicable literary career in that town, and as the calling most suited to my circumstances. Now I resolved to have none of it. I would get as far as possible from a profession that could so pervert a man's whole moral nature as to make him indifferent to the truth (about haunted houses or anything else), in the first place, and unwilling to correct a blunder afterward.

Possibly this state of things produced in my mind an unconscious resentment toward Sammy; I remember thinking that he ought to do something to correct the erroneous impression that was so unjust to me. Perhaps, as in other cases of desire and possession, the glory did not seem as great to him who had it as to him who wanted it. At all events, whether it was from this cause or only from ordinary and accidental circumstances, I found myself drifting away from close companionship

with Sammy and renewing my former intimacy with Fred Crawford. His sister Millicent had grown wonderfully in three years, and she sometimes made a third party in our talks and rambles.

One evening I was visiting Fred, and we were planning a fishing excursion, when Millicent said :

“ I should think you'd want Sammy Whitney to go with you ? ”

“ Why Sammy any more than any of the other boys ? ” said Fred.

“ Because he could charm the very fish out of the water,” said she.

“ How do you know how charming he is ? ” said Fred.

“ Oh,” she answered, blushing a little at her brother's misconception, “ I was thinking how beautifully he charmed the ghosts out of the haunted house.”

“ There it is again ! ” said I to myself. But aloud I said nothing. One reason why I did not claim my due in that transaction was, that I had read many stories the plot of which turned on a mistake ; and I observed that the victim of the mistake generally refrained from setting it right ; but by and by circumstances cleared it all up, and then he received a double meed of praise for his modesty and his patience. It seemed to me that I had to wait a long time for the arrival of the vindicating circumstances.

Even on this occasion, Fred, who understood the mat-

ter better than most of the boys, only answered his sister with the rather curt remark :

“Sammy didn’t do everything.”

“Oh, I know it,” said she. “They say some of the best things were suggested by old women in the crowd.”

“Worse, and more of it !” said I to myself.

Fred paid no attention to her remark, but went on talking of the arrangements for the fishing excursion. While I was listening to him, and trying to manifest more interest in the subject than I really felt, a turn of Millicent’s wrist and a flash in the lamp-light called my attention to the fact that she was wearing a certain bracelet for which I had never received any credit, though I had had something to do with putting it into her possession.

Altogether, I was in a very unsatisfactory state of mind when I walked home, and sincerely hoped it would rain heavily on the day that we had set for fishing.

It did not rain that day, but something happened that was much more important for me.

When Fred and I were returning home at dusk, each with a pole over his shoulder and a string of fish in the other hand, we met Pete Ruyter.

Pete intimated that he would like to speak to me alone, and Fred walked on while I stopped.

“I can’t talk about it now,” said Pete, “but I want

very anxious to see you and tell you something, and get you to help me."

"All right!" said I. "Will to-morrow be soon enough?"

"To-morrow does well," said he.

"And where?"

"I don't care where, only not too much close to our house."

"Then suppose we take a walk down along the river bank," said I.

"I will suppose so," said he.

I met him the next day, and we strolled down the familiar road that led to the scene of so many of our most enjoyable play-days. I was beginning to realize that those days must soon come to an end. They had lasted much longer for me than for many of my schoolmates, who were already placed in work-shops and counting-rooms to learn the serious business of life.

Pete walked along almost in silence, listening to my talk, but making few replies. It seemed as if, mentally at least, his head were constantly turned over his shoulder in apprehension that some one might follow us.

We sat down on the bank, near the place where I had stood when I overlooked Sammy while he was writing the poem.

"Now, Pete," said I, "what is it?"

"It's trouble," said he.

“What kind of trouble?”

“Some peoples gets married too much—that’s the trouble.”

“Isn’t your new step-father good to you?” said I.

“Was dunder and lightning good to that tree?” said he, pointing to the splintered remnant of an immense pine-tree on the opposite bank.

“What is the matter with him?” said I.

“He is a Dutchman,” said Pete, solemnly.

Such a criticism, from such a source, threw me into a fit of laughter.

“You don’t know Dutchmen, do you?” said Pete.

“Not very well,” said I.

“Some day you finds them out, and then you knows that when a Dutchman is ugly, he is dead ugly.”

“What does dead ugly mean?”

“It means that everything inside of the man, except the ugly, is dead.”

“Are there such people in the world?”

“Lots many of them.”

“What are you going to do about it?”

Pete looked over his shoulder before answering, and then said, in a low voice :

“I can do only one thing—I must run away.”

“Where will you go?” said I.

“I goes to sea — if I can get there.”

“Do you think that is the best place?”

"It is best for me," said Pete. "The Dutch was always good sailors, many centuries."

"Yes, that's true," said I, "the 'Book of Commerce' says so."

"And some was great admirals, to fight the battle-ships," said he.

"Yes," said I, "there was one of the same name as yours, Ruyter."

"Yes," said Pete, "my mother told me about him, and said I must grow up and be like him."

"That is impossible," said I.

"Why is it impossible?" said he.

"Because there is no chance now," said I. "Admiral Ruyter lived and fought his battles two hundred years ago. There will never be any more war now."

"Why not any more war?" said Pete. "Is peoples not ugly enough?"

"Oh, yes, I suppose they are as ugly as ever; but they know better now. They know that war kills a great many men, even on the side that wins. And they know that it destroys a great deal of property, and costs piles of money. And so, if they ever quarrel any more, they will just call in other friendly governments and talk it all over, and settle it in a sensible way."

"I wish they would," said Pete; "but I don't believe it; there is too much ugly in the world."

"Yes, but there is another thing," said I.

“What is that?”

“An American has invented a rifle that will kill off soldiers just like that!”—and I snapped my fingers a dozen times as rapidly as possible. “He says that when his new rifle comes into use there will be no use for it, because it will be certain that every man who goes to war will be killed, and therefore you can’t induce anybody to go. That’s the reason why he invented that kind of rifle.”

“Is that true?” said Pete.

“Yes,” said I, “it is true. His name is Sharps — Christian Sharps.”

“That was a funny name for such a man,” said Pete. “But of course it must be as you say. I am glad of it, for I don’t want to fight anybody and sink any ships with cannon bombshells; but I want to sail on the ocean, and take a big ship around the world some day, and explore more things as we explored on the canal.”

“That’s it,” said I. “If a man wants to do wonderful things now, and make a great name for himself, he must look to some other place than the battle-field. He must explore new countries, or discover new islands, or get to the North Pole (though I can’t find out what he’s going to do about it, after he gets there), or make wonderful inventions like the telegraph and the locomotive, or build enormous bridges and crystal palaces, or write more books like Shakespeare.”

"Did Mr. Shakespeare write the 'Book of Commerce'?" said Pete.

"No," said I, "Shakespeare did not write the 'Book of Commerce.' He wrote plays, which are not half so useful, but most people seem to like them better."

"Oh, did he write plays?" said Pete. "I thought it was works—I read it once at the back of the book behind the glass in the school-house."

I did not quite know whether Pete spoke innocently, or was making a joke, so I changed the subject.

"When are you going to sea?" said I.

"That's it," said he. "I don't know when, because I must get to the sea first, before I can go sailing on it."

"You mean you want to get to New York," said I.

"Yes," said he. "I might go up by the canal, and wait till a boat comes along that wants a driver, and hire out to drive, or maybe for a bow-hand. That way I could get to New York."

"Isn't that a good way?" said I.

"That's what I must do when I can't do any other way," said he. "But I think it's better if I could borrow money enough to go on the railroad. Then I get there quick, and anybody can't follow and catch me and bring me back."

"Would you like to borrow the money of me?"

"Yes, if you would be so kind to lend it," said he. "I would pay it as soon as I gets my first wages. I don't

know any of the other boys that could lend it but Sammy Whitney, and I don't like to ask him."

"Why not?" said I.

"Because," said he, "Sammy would make me take it for a present, and wouldn't let me pay him again; and I don't want to do that."

"There it is again!" said I to myself. "Sammy is so very generous that nobody can ask him to lend money, for fear he will insist upon giving it; but of course nobody suspects me of any such generosity — oh, no!"

If the money had been wanted for any ordinary purpose, I should probably have refused it, after hearing Pete's reason for coming to me instead of going to Sammy. But my sympathies were enlisted, and after a single resentful impulse I determined to assist him as much as I could.

"I will lend you the money," said I — "and — and — what if I should go with you?"

"Go with me?" he repeated, in astonishment. "Why do you want to run away? You got no step-father."

"I didn't intend to run away," said I. "I would ask my father about it, and go with his permission."

"But why go you to sea at all, when it is so pleasant here for you?"

"It is not pleasant here," said I, "and it grows more unpleasant every day. I see things ahead that will make me wish I had left this town long ago. And, when I do

leave it, I want to leave in such a way that I shall hear nothing about it for a long time."

"Then the sea is the place," said Pete. "There you gets no news, and our teacher says no news is good news. Yes, we shall have good news every day." And Pete laughed, which I had not seen him do for weeks.

"I'll let you have the money," said I. "And, if father gives his permission, I'll go at the same time, and we can meet in New York and sail on the same ship."

"But you mustn't let your father know I'm going," said he.

"Certainly," said I. "Nobody shall know it from me. You may run away, and I will — walk away, though I probably feel as much like running as you do."

CHAPTER XXI.

AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD.

MY father's consent was obtained much more easily than my mother's. One of her brothers had gone to sea long years before, with the reluctant consent of his mother, and on a promise to make but that one voyage; and on the return, within one day's sail of home, he was lost overboard in a storm. Naturally, then, my mother was strongly opposed to my project. One evening I overheard a small fragment of a conversation between my parents, in which my father said: "You can't shield him from all danger, wherever he is; he must take his risks like everybody else. He seems to have set his heart on this voyage, and though it is not what I should have chosen for him, I think it's best to let him go. He will feel more responsibility if he carries out his own project than if he adopts any that we might form for him, and it may be just what is wanted to make a man of him."

My mother at last consented, and set at work to prepare an outfit that would have added materially to the ship's cargo, but my father laughingly vetoed about three fourths of it.

I kept the news from the boys as long as possible, but of course they learned it at last, and when the day of parting came a dozen of them escorted me to the railway station. Pete Ruyter was among the number, and shook hands with me and bade me good-by the minute before I entered the car. Then, while the eyes of the whole group were still upon me, he slipped away, passed around to the other side of the train, and quietly entered another car. His ticket was in his pocket, and he had no luggage, not even the conventional bundle tied up in a handkerchief. The few things that he needed for the voyage were to be bought in New York.

We shipped as "boys" on the clipper *Osceola*, bound for China, *via* the Cape of Good Hope. The incidents of the voyage, though interesting to us at that time, were such as have been described by scores of authors, and in thousands of letters. It was long enough and varied enough to convince us that neither the delights nor the discomforts had been exaggerated. It was also long enough to accustom us to lack of news from home, so that when it was over there was no such eagerness to return or to hear from those we had left behind, as there might have been under other circumstances.

We called at Cape Town, where I mailed a letter to my parents, and then passed around the southern extremity of Africa, and laid our course across the Indian Ocean for the Strait of Sunda. It was a long and weary voyage

through that tropic sea ; but at last we sighted Java Head, and the next day we passed through the Strait. Turning somewhat out of our course, we made the Bay of Batavia, dropped anchor in the offing, and across the island-studded harbor saw the city and the mountains behind it.

Pete was a much better sailor than I ; but we both got along well enough (though it was a far rougher life than we had imagined), until in the last days of the voyage we became ill, as did two others of the crew. This so far disabled us that at Batavia the captain was willing to give us our discharge, which we as willingly accepted. Our idea was to get a run on shore and a few weeks of rest, and then ship again before the mast. But circumstances decreed that it should be otherwise.

The change from the confinement of life in the fore-castle to freedom on land, with a change of diet also, and the escape from the monotony of the ocean, soon restored us to our usual health and vigor, and then we found that we were loath to go back to the duties of a sailor. We strolled about the city for several days, and made the acquaintance of every quarter, including the beautiful suburb where the European residents have their homes. One day I wandered into the dusky town library. I had begun to see the aimlessness of my life, and was in a somewhat mournful mood, which was not relieved when my mind recalled a fragment of a poem written there, half a century before, by a young English scholar, who sacrificed

his life in the search for Indian manuscripts among those musty books and documents :

“ Fade, day-dreams sweet, from memory fade !
The perished bliss of youth's first prime,
That once so bright on fancy played,
Revives no more in after-time.
The daring thoughts that soared sublime
Are sunk in ocean's southern wave.”

My attention had first been directed to the poem by Sammy Whitney, who greatly admired it, and I now remembered a summer evening when he recited the whole of it, in his low clear voice, as we leaned on the parapet of the upper bridge and listened to the flow of the river.

We began to make little excursions inland in various directions, which we greatly enjoyed. Living was cheap, and as we had no expensive habits, our wages lasted a long time. Pete's ability to speak Dutch — though very imperfect, I suspect — was a great help to us. The whole country — in its natural features, its cultivation, its architecture, and its people — was a complete surprise. It occurred to me that when Byron wrote that the fire that on his bosom preyed was “lone as some volcanic isle,” he could hardly have had in mind the greatest volcanic island on the globe; for this was anything but lone. Perhaps it was reading Byron too much, and taking him too seriously, that had made it possible for me to fly to the ends of the earth for a reason so foolish and a purpose so inadequate. With

an area somewhat smaller than that of my native State, Java had a population four times as large; and what I had supposed to be a land of savages, was governed with the most perfect order and discipline. The great mountains were clothed in verdure almost to their summits. The lowlands and the terraced sides of the hills were fertile and luxurious gardens. The hundreds of temples, built of chiselled stones and sometimes overgrown with tropical vegetation, surpassed in magnitude and beauty all other pre-historic structures in the known world.

We went among the coffee and sugar plantations, frequently made the acquaintance of the superintendents, and hired out as assistants to them for short periods. Sometimes we were together, sometimes we made engagements that separated us, but we always kept track of each other, and a year seldom went by without our going off on some excursion in which we used up the surplus of our wages.

When we had been there about two years, an English naturalist arrived in the island, and I made his acquaintance and entered his service, spending three or four months with him in travel. He was collecting vast numbers of birds, butterflies, and animals; and the search for them and chase after them, with the help of native hunters, was quite exciting, and at times dangerous. The skins of the birds and animals had to be carefully prepared and packed for transportation to England, and I became expert at the work. But his wild peacocks and gorgeous

butterflies were not so interesting to me as the gigantic stone temple of Borobodo, which he appeared to look at only incidentally. Still, I gained some knowledge of natural history, and when he left Java, to continue his explorations and collections in Sumatra, I hoped he would ask me to accompany him; but in this I was disappointed. He was kind and pleasant in every way, and paid me liberally according to the scale of wages there; but he intimated that he had no further use for me.

After his departure I went to Buitenzorg, where I sought and obtained employment in the botanical gardens, being recommended to it by my experience with him. This place is about a thousand feet above sea-level, has a most enjoyable climate, and is rendered very beautiful by the great variety of trees and plants.

But the wandering habit was fastening itself upon me, and in the next three years I held and lost twice as many places, any one of which, if I had clung to it, would have brought me a competence in a few years. As soon as I found that my stay in the island was likely to be prolonged, I had written to my parents, telling them to address me at Batavia; but during the entire period of my absence not one letter reached my hands. One or two must have come to the Batavia post-office while I was in the interior; but as they were not called for within three months they were disposed of as dead.

One day I was wandering among the four hundred



"THE BUILDING HAS BEEN UNHAUNTED."

ruined temples of Gunong, and sat down on a sculptured stone to rest and meditate. I was naturally reminded of the many times when I had sat with Sammy on his boulder and discussed the future that was so full of possibilities. The bow of promise that then appeared on our horizon seemed to demand but a little journey ere we should reach the treasures at its foot. Now I found myself an aimless vagabond in the remotest quarter of the globe. As I sat there and contemplated the mournful remnants of a mighty past — the clustered temples, the overturned statues, the multitude of exquisite carvings, the noble flights of stone steps — some of them containing a thousand — and thought what mighty labors of millions of men must have been expended there, men whose very race had perished from the earth and left no record but this — it seemed to me that the life of any individual was no more than the flicker of a spark in the ashes of a burned-out fire. I was horrified to think of the precious years of my youth that I had squandered, and it seemed to me that I must get back as quickly as possible to a land where the life of a man may be spent in something better than the carving and building of a wall for the vegetation of a future century to overthrow, and the traveller from a distant clime to examine with idle curiosity.

I resolved to return to Batavia, ship once more as a sailor before the mast, and work my passage home. I went thirty miles out of my way to see Pete Ruyter, and

found him well established with a large coffee-planter. His inheritance of industrious habit had asserted itself, and he had no inclination to leave a pleasant place where he was so likely to prosper. He repaid in gold, with interest, the money that I had lent him to get away from home, we bade each other a lingering good-by, and I never saw him again.

Ten days later I sailed on the British ship Amy Robsart, bound for Liverpool, whence it was easy to get a similar passage to my native land.

CHAPTER XXII.

WHAT HAPPENED AT HOME.

IT would have been easy to send home a letter announcing my coming, which, going by steamer while I followed in a sailing-vessel, would have broken the surprise and given my parents ample opportunity to make such preparation as they might think fit for my reception. But I preferred not to do so. I was somewhat ashamed of having gone away at all ; I had certainly not accomplished anything to be proud of ; and I did not want any prodigal-son demonstration. The mere matter of creating a surprise had always seemed to me rather childish, but I chose it now in preference to the alternatives.

When the ship reached her moorings in the port of New York, I waited only long enough to get my pay before taking a train for my old home.

While about a hundred miles of the journey were still before me, a man in a blue coat came into the car at a way station and modestly looked about for a seat. I moved closer to the window, and offered him the unoccupied sitting next to me, which he accepted with a quiet "thank you !"

Presently he turned and looked at my face intently for a moment, and then called me by name. I looked up, recognized him, and said, "Gouldburn!" at the same time extending my right hand. He grasped it warmly in his left, and, observing his loss, I said :

"Dear boy, I am delighted to see you! But where is the hand that used to draw the pictures and the sailing-charts?"

"I lost it in the trenches before Petersburg," said he.

"What Petersburg? What trenches?" said I.

"Why, Petersburg, Virginia, of course—the military trenches," said he.

"What are military trenches doing in that sleepy little town?" said I.

Gouldburn looked into my face in amazement.

"Where have you been?" said he.

"I've been on the other side of the world for more than six years," said I, "most of the time in the interior of the island of Java."

"And haven't you heard about our war?" said he.

"No," said I, "I didn't know there had been any war; and when I left home I thought there were never to be any more wars at all; they told me the wisest people said so."

"The wisest people are mistaken sometimes," said he. "Within the time of your absence there have been two wars in Europe, and the great rebellion in China has been

brought to a close by fierce fighting; besides our own gigantic struggle."

"What nation did you fight with?" said I.

"With no nation, we fought among ourselves—it was a civil war."

"What did you fight about?"

"About slavery, and State sovereignty, and the right of secession."

"What is the right of secession?"

"The supposed right of one or more States to withdraw from the Union and set up an independent government of their own."

"What!" said I, "can they do that?"

"Some of them thought they could, four years ago," said he; "but it has just been decided that they can not."

"By the Supreme Court?" said I.

"Supreme Court!" said he, in amazement. "No! What do you suppose they cared for the Supreme Court? I tell you it was decided by bullets and shells and cannonballs with burning gunpowder behind them—by a long and bloody war."

"How long? How bloody?"

"It lasted just four years; and for every single day of that time, Sundays and all, on an average, the lives of more than four hundred men were destroyed—some shot dead on the battle-field, some dying of swamp fevers where they camped in malarial regions, and some perish-

ing by confinement in loathsome prisons. Besides all those who lost their lives, three or four times as many were wounded in various ways. One general had both eyes dashed out by a rifle-ball, in the greatest battle of the war; many lost legs or arms; I, as you see, lost my right hand; and I know a young fellow who had barely got into the service, had not fired his musket three times, when a shot came along and disabled both of his arms forever, leaving him perfectly well and strong in every other respect."

All this was so new, so incredible, so ghastly, that I found it impossible to comprehend it, and the wildest questions arose in my mind.

"Who were these men?" said I.

"Who were they? Why, they were American citizens, of course. Most of them were the men of our generation, those who were boys when you and I were boys."

"And you mean to say that more than half a million of the boys of our country, who were playing and studying and preparing for manhood when we were, are now lying in bloody graves?"

"Yes, that is the mournful fact."

"It must have been a gigantic blunder," said I.

"There is no doubt about that," said Gouldburn. "The only question is, whose was the blunder? Either the Southern people blundered in trying to go out of the Union, or the Northern people blundered in forcibly pre-

venting them. Whichever it was, the finest young men of our generation, both North and South, have perished in their youth ; and the survivors will have to be taxed all their lives for a national debt which is so enormous that some say it can never be paid."

"What do the people think of such a performance and such a state of things ?" said I.

"It is difficult to say," said Gouldburn. "Those who lost sons and brothers in the conflict naturally take a mournful view of it, and believe it was not worth the cost. A few days ago I heard a woman who lost her three sons — two in battle, and one in captivity — reading a poem that had some very striking lines. She broke down at :

‘ For what end is it done,
If we have not a son,’

and declared she was sorry that her boys had ever been born. Those who made money by the war naturally take a different view."

"What !" said I, "did anybody make money by it ?"

"Oh, yes, but that's nothing new," said he. "The contractors in the old Roman wars cheated their government and made money, and it has been done in every war since. Still, it was not necessary to cheat in our war. The contracts were so large that the contractors could fulfil them honestly and still make fortunes, and many of them did so. People of a philosophic turn of mind are

apparently divided in opinion. Some of them think the question had to be fought out sooner or later, and the sooner the better; others think that if the seceding States had simply been let alone, they would have asked to be taken back after a while. But in one thing they are all agreed—that somehow or other it was a pitiful and shameful waste of life and energy. Probably twenty-five or thirty years hence, when a new generation has grown up, this war will be talked about as a glorious thing, just as you and I used to talk of the Revolutionary war in which our grandfathers fought, thinking of them always as gray-beards and not as young men; and then poets and novelists and dramatists will look for the picturesque things about it, and work them up into literature, or represent them on the stage. But to-day, to the man who took part in it, who has heard the thud of the bullet that struck down his schoolmate or his brother by his side; or who has helped to lay a pontoon in the face of the enemy, and seen his tent-mate reel with a shot in his brain, tumble off into the river, and disappear; or who has been in a naval fight and seen a ball as large as your head come in through a port-hole and sweep away a whole gun's-crew of gallant sailors; or who has spent months as a prisoner in a crowded stockade, and seen those who were once his playmates dying for want of ordinary food, medicine, and shelter; I tell you, to the men who witnessed those things there was not much glory about it. There seems to be a

wide difference between your grandfather's comrades and your own."

"It must have been a gloomy four years with you," said I.

"Yes, but not so much so as you would think. The soldiers had their songs and their jests and their stories; there seemed to be nothing so serious but that some of them would joke about it, and the war gave occasion for whole volumes of humorous literature."

While I was trying to comprehend these incomprehensible things, which half an hour before I had never heard of, the train stopped at a little station, and I saw by the ticket-office window a portrait of a sad-faced man surrounded with black crape.

"Whose picture is that?" said I.

"That is Abraham Lincoln," said Gouldburn, in a reverential tone, but with a renewed expression of surprise.

"Who is Abraham Lincoln?" said I.

"It is difficult to realize," he answered, after a pause in which he seemed to be considering which of many things he should say first, "that you know absolutely nothing of the great war and have never even heard of President Lincoln. Some of us think him one of the greatest men that ever lived — perhaps, all things considered, the very greatest."

"Did he lose his life in the war?" said I.

"Not exactly *in* the war, and yet he lost it *by* the war,"

said Gouldburn. "He was in a theatre in Washington, looking at a comedy, when he was shot by an assassin, a sort of fanatic, who seemed to be half crazed because his side had proved the loser—for the war was just over, and the Southern armies were surrendering."

"But were the theatres open during such a war as that?" said I.

"Oh, yes," said Gouldburn, "and they were never better patronized. I suppose the people were glad to be relieved now and then from the terrible strain of the great tragedy. Whenever a soldier got a furlough and went home for a few days, he was pretty sure to go to the theatre."

I was silent for some time, trying to think how this could be. Then I said :

"I don't believe I am acquainted with my own countrymen."

"Probably not," said Gouldburn. "When the war was fairly begun, we found we had not been very well acquainted with ourselves."

"Did you find yourselves better, or worse, than you had supposed?" said I.

"Both," said he. "We found we were willing to kill each other to an unlimited extent; in that respect we were worse. But we found also that we were willing to stand up and be killed, to the number of thousands in a single day, in some of the most terrific battles that were ever

fought. In that respect we were better — perhaps. We found there was no sacrifice that we were not willing to make for our country; and we found that we could jest in the presence of suffering and death. We found there were men eager to make fortunes by cheating the soldiers in the field with poor qualities of clothing and provisions; and we found there were millionnaires who were willing to go into the ranks and take their chances among the bullets, like any other soldier. We found that slender and delicate fellows, who used to wear kid gloves and perfume their handkerchiefs, and would have been laughed at as ladies' men, often made the most valorous soldiers, kept their muskets bright, marched all day without complaining, and never shirked a fight."

"Then there were really battles and sieges in our country?" said I.

"More than two thousand," said he.

"If there were so many, they must have been all small affairs," said I.

"Not by any means," said he. "In the greatest battle more than two hundred cannon were being fired at once, as fast as they could be loaded, and the roar was heard forty miles away."

"Were you the representative of our town?" said I.

"What?" said he.

"Were you our representative?" I repeated — "the man that went from our town into the army?"

For a moment Gouldburn seemed like one whose breath has been taken away by a sudden blow. As soon as he could recover it he exclaimed :

“My dear fellow, what are you thinking of? The Government put more than a million men into the field, uniformed them, armed them, drilled them, and made soldiers of them. Our city furnished a large part of four regiments, each of which contained a thousand men.”

“Oh, yes, of course it was a foolish question,” said I, “and I ought to have known better than to ask it. I begin to get an idea what a great war it must have been, but I don’t know what it was all about.”

“Do you remember that before you went away there was great political agitation on the subject of slavery?” said Gouldburn.

“I remember it well,” said I — “the Nebraska bill, and squatter sovereignty, and the Know-nothings, and the struggle in Kansas, and all that.”

“Yes, that was it,” said he. “The question was, whether slavery should be confined to the States where it existed, or be permitted to go into the Territories and make slave States of them as they came into the Union. The slaveholders said they ought to have the same right to take their property (meaning the slaves) into the Territories that other citizens had to go there with other kinds of property. Some of the Northern people agreed with them, but the majority said No, they would not permit it if they

could help it ; they believed slavery was never intended to be perpetual and universal, and it ought to be kept where it was until it gradually died out. At the next Presidential election after you left us, Mr. Lincoln was the anti-slavery candidate, and was elected. Then there was great excitement in the Southern States, and they began to carry out the threat of disunion which they had made so many times. They said the Union was nothing but a federation, and any State had a right to go out when it pleased, and they pleased to go out now. South Carolina went first, and the other States at the extreme south soon followed her. They passed ordinances of secession, declaring that all connection between them and the United States was severed, and their Senators and Congressmen left their seats in the Capitol at Washington and went home. Then they formed a new general government, and called themselves the Confederate States of America. And they began at once to raise armies and take possession of the United States forts and arsenals that were within their territory. Nothing was done to stop them until the new administration came into power, in March. The first battle took place a month later ; it was the bombardment of Fort Sumter, in Charleston harbor. Then President Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand volunteers to form an army, and more than twice as many men offered themselves. They uniformed them and armed them as fast as they could, and both sides kept

putting more men into the field from time to time, until within a year it grew into a great war. The National Government not only raised armies, but quickly created a navy and blockaded the ports of the Southern States, so that it was very difficult for the Southerners to get supplies from abroad. And they built gunboats for the Western rivers—the Mississippi, the Ohio, the Tennessee, the Cumberland, the Red, and the Arkansas—many of them within ninety days from the laying of the keel. And they made a new kind of iron-clad war-ships, called monitors, such as were never heard of before. And they had arsenals and foundries running day and night making rifles and great guns. In the second year there began to be great battles—sometimes one side being victorious, sometimes the other, and sometimes neither—and it grew constantly bloodier and more costly till its close. The Government spent three million dollars a day. It ended in the surrender of all the Southern armies, the complete destruction of the Confederate Government, the abolition of slavery, and the forcing of the seceded States back into the Union.”

This great piece of history, told in so few words, was like a blinding flash of revelation to me. My first reflection was, that I had been unfortunate as well as foolish in leaving home when I did, for I had missed a mighty drama, such as was not likely to be enacted again for centuries. My second thought was, to ask about the other companions of my boyhood.

"I suppose, then," said I, "that some of the other boys whom I knew took part in the war?"

"Yes, most of them."

"Was Sammy Whitney in it?"

"Oh, yes, Sammy had what we call a splendid record as a soldier. He enlisted at the very beginning, in a regiment that volunteered for two years, and was badly wounded in the battle of Seven Pines. After his recovery he re-enlisted and became the model soldier of his regiment. He had just been commissioned lieutenant when they went into the battle of Pleasant Hill, in Louisiana, last year. After the fight he was missing, and as he has never been heard from since, it is supposed that he was among the killed."

"That was a hard blow to his father," said I, "for he was very fond of Sammy."

"Yes," said Gouldburn, "but it was supposed to be a harder one to somebody else."

"Who was that?"

"Do you remember Fred Crawford's sister, Millicent?"

"Yes, perfectly."

"To her."

"Indeed!" said I, "and where is she now?"

"She is still living in her father's house, and I am told she dresses in mourning; but that may not be true: I have not seen her."

"By the way, what became of Fred?" said I.

“Fred served two years in a cavalry regiment, and after it was mustered out he went back as a sutler and made considerable money. Now he talks of going to Alabama, to work an abandoned plantation.”

“Perhaps I could be useful if I went with him,” said I. “But tell me about the rest of the boys. Where is Babbity Ban?”

“Babbity carried a musket for three months, until he was wounded at Bull Run. Then he got his discharge; and soon afterward, as nearly as we could find out, he entered the secret service of the Government. He had a good many adventures, and at one time the Confederates caught him, and were going to hang him. I don’t know how he got off—probably by his own wits. He has just been appointed to a clerkship in Washington.”

“What became of little Alfred Landell?”

“He was killed in the bloody angle at Spottsylvania.”

“And Harvey Allen?”

“He was wounded in the heel at New Hope Church, and died of lockjaw.”

“And Benny Whaples?”

“Benny tried to enlist at the first call for troops, but they rejected him because he was near-sighted. Charlie Dilloner was rejected at the same time, because he was not quite old enough, and they sat down together on the curb-stone and cried. Benny afterward managed to get in as a hospital steward, and Charlie two years

later received a staff appointment in one of the Western armies. A fragment of shell took off his leg at Resaca, and his life was despaired of. But he pulled through, and when he has entirely recovered he will probably go into business with his father."

"And Robert Holmes?"

"Robert fell at Antietam. He was first lieutenant of our company. We were making a charge into the woods around a little stone church that stood at the fork of a road. The captain had been wounded earlier in the day, and Robert was leading us. There was an ugly fence to climb, and he got to it first and was half over, shouting, 'Come on, boys!' when a rifle-bullet struck him in the face, and he went down. After the charge I crawled over to him as soon as possible (for I had been wounded in the foot) and found him breathing his last."

"When I knew that boy," said I, "he was always bubbling over with good-nature. While I should have been certain that he would not shirk any duty, I should hardly have expected that he would be conspicuous in any such serious business as killing men."

"He was one of the best and most efficient officers in the regiment," said Gouldburn; "and we all thought if he had lived he would have commanded it some day. Service in the war developed the characters of a good many young men in unexpected ways."

"And Frank Bradfield?"

"He died of swamp fever."

"And Dicky Barker?"

"Went into the navy, and was lost in an iron-clad that foundered off Cape Hatteras."

"And Andy Berthrong?"

"He went all through the war without a scratch. There are forty-seven notches on the stock of the musket that hangs over his desk—the number of his battles. He was a good soldier, but never got above sergeant. He has just gone into the grocery business."

"And Wally Durney?"

"He was a commissary sergeant, and said to be very efficient—never allowed the boys to go hungry. He got a bullet in the shoulder when the enemy's cavalry attacked the train."

"And Maurice Smith?"

"Maurice fought against us."

"I wouldn't have believed it," said I, "although he was an Englishman."

"He couldn't help himself," said Gouldburn. "He had gone to Mobile to enter his uncle's counting-house, when the war broke out, and he was forced into the Confederate service. He was in Fort Morgan when Farragut's fleet went by."

"Who is Farragut?" said I.

"He is the greatest naval commander that ever lived," said Gouldburn. "But there is no use in my trying to ex-

plain things to you piecemeal. You have everything to learn, and you'll have to begin at the beginning and read up. I was going to say that Maurice's brother, Emory, had enlisted in the navy and was in that fleet."

"You haven't told me about your own adventures," said I.

"Mine was just ordinary service in the infantry," said Gouldburn, "plenty of tedious marching and hard fighting, a painful, but not serious, wound at Antietam, and a hand lost at Petersburg."

"How many actions were you in?" said I.

"Thirty-one (not counting skirmishes), until I lost my hand. That was in the last campaign of the war, and the opposing lines around Petersburg, which we were besieging, were so close that if a man on either side showed a head or an arm above the breastworks he was certain to be shot at sight. One day I observed that our head-log—that's the log that we used to place on top of the breastworks—was knocked partly out of place. I put up my hand to push it back, when fisht! came an Enfield bullet and shattered my wrist. They cut off the hand and sent me home. I had never got higher than orderly sergeant; but my health had held out wonderfully, and I was expecting soon to be commissioned lieutenant, when I was wounded."

"What will you do now?" said I, wondering how a man without his right hand was to make a living.

"I've learned to write with my left hand," said he, "and have got a place as book-keeper, where my duties are to begin next week."

"What will you do with your land in Michigan?"

"I have sold it," said he. "When I went to look at it, I found that the neighbors had cut off all the oak-trees, made them into stave-bolts, and carried them to market. I was glad to take ten dollars an acre for it."

"Have you seen my father lately?" said I, venturing at last upon a question that I was half afraid to ask.

"No, for he has gone West," said Gouldburn. "Your sister was married about six weeks ago, and went to Madison to live, and immediately after the wedding your father and mother removed to—to Milwaukee, I think, where he had a tempting business offer. Of course you will go out there, but you must stop first and be a guest for a few days at my bachelor quarters. They are very modest, but I don't mind that, and you will not. My ambitions are not what they were in boyhood."

I accepted Gouldburn's invitation thankfully, and a few minutes later our train arrived at the station in my native town.

"What became of the dog with the firm name? I expected to see him bounding up to meet you," said I.

"He went out with the Thirteenth, and was a great favorite in camp and on the march, but was struck by a stray ball at Chantilly. Poor Towjer!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RAINBOW'S END.

THE next morning, when Gouldburn went to his business, I strolled out into the once familiar streets, where nobody knew me, but I knew many whom I met. After an hour of aimless wandering I found myself going, by some sort of mental gravitation, toward the home of my old friends, the Crawfords. While I was still some distance from the house I suddenly broke in two, as I had occasionally done when a boy, and a colloquy ensued between the two pieces.

"Now, where are you going?"

"I'm going up this street, and I thought I'd just call in at the Crawfords', if I happened to stroll so far."

"Why do you want to call there?"

"To see Fred, of course."

"Why do you wish to see him?"

"For old friendship's sake, and also about that plantation which he's going to work. My experience in Java ought to be valuable to him."

"Yes, no doubt. But is there any other reason?"

"Well — perhaps there *may* be."

“Don’t you know perfectly well that there is? And don’t you think it would be better not to call at present? You can probably see Fred at his father’s office.”

“I dare say you are right. I will walk the other way.”

It was fortunate that I did walk the other way, and kept on walking the other way; for it took me toward the railway station, and when I had nearly reached it a train arrived. I stood idly at the door, watching the passengers as they came out, to see if I should recognize some of my former townsmen. Among the last was a thin, pale-faced man, in blue clothes that were badly faded and somewhat ragged, who looked as if he had not had a hearty meal in all his life. He walked slowly, as if from weakness, and carried no luggage of any kind. Thin as he was, I needed but one look straight into his face.

“Sammy!”

He recognized me at the same instant, and we were in each other’s arms.

“Have you risen from the dead?” said I.

“And you from the bottom of the sea?” said he.

“Oh, no, I have just returned from the island of Java, where I remained longer than I ought to.”

“And I from the rebel stockade at Tyler, Texas, where I remained longer than I wanted to. I have been there ever since the battle of Pleasant Hill.”

I walked with him toward his father’s house, and his native politeness, asserting itself after its old habit, made



A DOUBLE SURPRISE.

me tell my story first, though I felt ashamed to tell it at all, when I considered how it contrasted with his.

The straightest route to Sammy's home took us through the street where the Crawfords lived. As we were passing their house I saw, from the corner of my eye, the outline of a young lady sitting near a front window. The next instant the blind was thrown open and there was a piercing scream. Sammy immediately turned his back upon me without the slightest apology, sprang up the steps, and disappeared in the house.

There was nothing for me to do but go to the small picture-gallery that still maintained a precarious existence in the town, interest myself in the daubs that covered its walls, and cultivate an outward semblance of composure.

"What are you doing?" said Sammy to me, two days later, when he walked into Gouldburn's bachelor quarters.

"I am packing up my little belongings," said I, "to go West and find my father."

"You can't go just yet," said he.

"Why not?" said I.

"Because I want you to be best man at my wedding."

"Just as you say," I answered, throwing aside the valise; "I'll go to the wedding, not as a Java nigger, but as your best friend."

"Certainly, as my best friend," said Sammy, laughing at the allusion to a boyish discussion with which the reader was made familiar in an early chapter.

After the wedding, when I resumed the packing of the valise, I found it difficult to make up my mind whether my real preference was to go to the far West or return to the far East. It seemed evident that rainbows carry treasure at but one end, and that I was generally fated to chase the wrong end. A man does not always care to tell his friends of his successes, and he never cares to have them tell him of his failures. If I returned to the East, it would make no difference whether Fortune favored me or not; while if I went to the West, I might begin my life anew. The great bow that had spanned the horizon of my youth was now faded away completely, and I had no hope that it would ever be repeated; but in time I learned to console myself with the belief that where it rested I had found the solid gold of priceless experience. Romance was apparently dead; but life and energy and a world full of duty remained — duty that was doubled and made more imperative for me, because so many young men of my generation had gone down in the great sacrifice. In the shadow of that awful bereavement, our country seemed to call upon every citizen for consecration as solemn, and work as serious, in the quiet times when wars are incurred or averted as in the heat of battle summers. It is not probable that I ever accomplished this, but it is something to have dreamed it.

THE END.

